

# PDS Partners

The Official Magazine of the National Association for Professional Development Schools

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## A Message From the President

*Donna M. Culan, Howard County Public School System*

If you were to ask someone outside of NAPDS or outside of your own PDS the question, "What is a Professional Development School?", what do you think their response would be? Are you already envisioning the quizzical look that comes with hearing those three words? Can you hear the answers that might be provided? I recently asked this question of three people—one in the field of education and two from outside the field. Their responses:

- Isn't that what we used to call vo-tech? Why do they keep changing the names? (Non-educator)
- I would think that's a more specialized high school—maybe one to get kids ready for careers in professional fields like nursing and law enforcement. (Non-educator)
- I haven't the slightest idea! (Educator)

The most striking response is the one from the educator. An education professional who has no idea what a PDS is! I believe this lack of knowing, unfortunately, is more the norm than not. Because of responses demonstrating a lack of knowledge or responses that indicate a misperception of what a PDS is, we as PDS professionals and members of NAPDS need to be proactive. We need to look for the many ways to clearly explain what our work is to those who do not know or understand; we need to look for opportunities to invite others into our work to see for themselves what a PDS is (and maybe even how much more it can be!).

I would encourage each of us to talk with our stakeholders and develop a plan for informing others about Professional Development Schools. It starts with each of us at our local levels and certainly continues through NAPDS at the national (and international!) level. Discuss the work you do and how to begin to educate others on the work and its tremendous importance to student achievement, teacher preparation, and continuing professional development. Who might you want to educate? Parents and community members, P-12 and IHE staff, superintendents, deans, presidents, local government officials, state legislators, local media, to name just a few. Possible opportunities in which to include or invite these groups:

- Meetings of the governing body of your PDS
- Professional development events occurring because of the PDS or involving PDS stakeholders
- Celebratory events at or within the PDS or the college/university
- Observation by college/university supervisor and/or mentor teachers of interns (or interns and mentors who co-teach)
- School improvement team meetings that demonstrate the link between the work in the school and the PDS
- The PDS National Conference co-sponsored by the University of South Carolina and NAPDS

The above is only a small list of possibilities. Be creative! Invitation and inclusion of others in the work of a PDS are easy things to do with no additional preparation necessary. Through my own experiences, I have found that an invitation goes a long way. People like the acknowledgement of importance and many do not want to lose that. As a result, they will do all they can to be a part of an event or opportunity. Once there, they do truly want to learn and understand why they have been invited or included. Take this opportunity to educate them about what you do, what a PDS is, and why it is so important.



As an association, NAPDS continues to look to ways to make connections with those who do not know what PDSs are. We will also be creative in the ways in which we can represent all of us at the national level by informing others. We welcome your input into the best ways to do this. There are many independent PDS voices out there but as NAPDS, together we are one very strong voice!

Together, at our local levels and at the national level, let us all look for all opportunities to bring others into the work we do and increase their understanding of the work. Let us take advantage of every opportunity to begin the education process for the question, “What is a Professional Development School?”.

## Old Dogs and Eternal Spring Time: PDS Evaluation with Partnership Teachers and University Faculty

*Margaret E. Bolick and Denise Hill, Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi  
Robyn Hernandez and Erica Garcia, Schanen Estates Elementary School  
Shirley Thornton (Retired), Flour Bluff Junior High School*

“Deep reflection of the partnership led a campus liaison of nine years to write, ‘...I hear from many teachers who tell me that mentoring a PST has made them more aware of their own teaching styles. They used that awareness to improve in areas where they were weak. I have observed clinical teachers demonstrating greater confidence in their abilities after mentoring [PSTs].’”

The Professional Development Schools (PDS) in South Texas partnering with Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi (TAMU-CC) were created in 1997 with four functions—teacher preparation, professional development, inquiry, and renewal of curriculum and instruction. PDS program evaluation is ongoing each semester with respect to the influences upon pre-service teachers (PSTs). In addition to the ongoing PST evaluations, surveys completed by TAMU-CC PDS graduates and their respective administrators report the perceived success of the PDS graduates as beginning teachers (Hill & Bolick, 2007). However, evaluation has been mostly informal with our PDS partnership in-service teachers. In this article, information is shared on the understanding of a survey conducted with the in-service teacher partners in four elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school within the Corpus Christi Independent School District, and the Early Childhood (EC)-12 schools in the Flour Bluff Independent School District.

In a report from the American Educational Research Association (Cochran-Smith & Zeichner, 2005), Professional Development Schools (PDSs) have shown a positive

effect on student and teacher learning. To further enhance the research in this area, the TAMU-CC PDS faculty administered a short, open-ended survey with our partnership teachers to determine whether teacher learning was affected. Questions to determine the influences of the partnership on teaching, the learning of EC-12 students, and perceived strengths of the partnership as well as suggestions for areas of improvement were included.

The partnership teachers’ most common response to the question about influence on teaching was that they learned new ideas (43%). Thirty-two percent (32%) of the teachers became more reflective, and 29% became more aware of modeling effective teaching strategies for the PSTs to observe. While addressing the issue of becoming more reflective, one teacher reported, “I was able to reflect on my teaching practices and make notations on changes or areas of improvement.” Another teacher stated, “Having a PST helped me to remember to stop and have fun teaching. Because I was able to help the PST with non-TAKS [state assessment] fun ideas....” Deep reflection of the partnership led a campus liaison of nine years to write, “...I hear from many teachers who tell me that

mentoring a PST has made them more aware of their own teaching styles. They used that awareness to improve in areas where they were weak. I have observed clinical teachers demonstrating greater confidence in their abilities after mentoring [PSTs].”

Partnership teacher responses concerning the influence on student learning were divided into two categories: forty-three percent (43%) reported that the PSTs provide an extra set of hands, while forty-one percent (41%) reported that the PSTs provide a change of teaching styles and techniques. The overwhelming response of the teachers with regard to the question of the strengths of the partnership was that the PSTs received a better preparation for the “real world” of teaching (73%). Thirteen percent (13%) of the teachers reported that the partnerships encouraged their EC-12 students to attend college. One teacher stated the partnership “helps the [EC-12] student to see someone going through the schooling process. They do not always have people in their lives actually in school [university].” The single suggestion for improvement to the partnerships was voiced by the middle and high school partnership teachers. These teachers reported that more time planning and observing/teaching in

the classrooms was needed.

As reported here and in other research literature (Hurd, 2007), partnership teachers receive professional development when mentoring pre-service teachers by improving teaching through

reflection on their own practice. One eighth grade teacher wrote, “We ‘old dogs’ benefit by honing our skills to teach them [PSTs]; and their [PSTs’] youth and enthusiasm create an eternal ‘spring time’ in our classrooms.” Analyzing the survey is part of the program

evaluation at TAMU-CC; however, it is the informal evaluation, the everyday conversations which make up our PDS partnerships, that reveal a “shared commitment to innovative and reflective practice by all participants” (NAPDS, 2008).

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## Sympathetic Friendliness: A Mentoring Stance

*Bernard Badiali, Penn State University*

*Note: Bernard shared the following speech at the Opening Ceremony of the 2009 Penn State PDS Conference*

A few summers ago, I read several books and articles written by the Harvard psychologist and teacher, Robert Kegan. His work has added much to my understanding of interns and the struggles they encounter at this stage of their development as teachers. Kegan writes mainly about transformations of consciousness throughout the lifespan. I like his work because it describes human development from the teen years through old age. This may sound odd, but at my advanced age I really have to make an effort to understand how interns see the world these days since I truly believe in the principle that you cannot teach students you do not know. I have to remind myself that most of the interns we work with this year were born in 1989. That gives them many advantages working in our classrooms, but it also presents disadvantages as well.

Kegan relates quite reflectively that after 25 years in the field, he sees that teaching’s greatest reward is that it allows him to live much of his life in a state of “sympathetic

friendliness.” He means that a teacher’s role involves extending friendly sympathy to the student who is feeling discouragement, fear, anger, or confusion. I don’t think he means sympathy in any sappy or sentimental way. Although the word suggests something deeply emotional, I think he means sympathy in a very intellectual way as well. It is the same way that his contemporary, Parker Palmer, means when he uses the word “heart.” I’ve seen all of us in the PDS behave this way with the children. How often have you seen a mentor, paraprofessional, intern, or principal throw a sympathetic arm around a student who seems to be struggling? How often have you seen them brush a child’s tear away or give them an emotional boost by offering words of encouragement? In a way, learning to teach well involves the gradual training of one’s sympathies toward students who are trying (or appear not to be trying) to learn something new. Teaching well involves having a sympathetic understanding of our students and their struggle to learn. I’ve come to see friendly sympathy

as a kind of stance similar to the “inquiry stance” we try to help interns to assume as they begin their careers.

From my earliest experiences with teaching, teacher education, and Professional Development Schools, I have understood that schooling operates in layers. The first layer is what transpires between a teacher and her students. What are her expectations for student learning? In what ways, obvious and subtle, does she communicate them? What conditions does she create for student success? How does she form and maintain a respectful and caring relationship with her students?

Questions like these extend to a second layer as well: the layer between the teacher educator and the would-be teacher. Any of us who presume to teach teachers, whether we are college professors, principals, staff development specialists, etc., have the double burden of not only teaching, but of modeling what we teach. For example, we cannot tell new

*“How often have you seen a mentor, paraprofessional, intern, or principal throw a sympathetic arm around a student who seems to be struggling? How often have you seen them brush a child’s tear away or give them an emotional boost by offering words of encouragement? In a way, learning to teach well involves the gradual training of one’s sympathies toward students who are trying (or appear not to be trying) to learn something new. Teaching well involves having a sympathetic understanding of our students and their struggle to learn.”*

*“We must identify, ferret out, and make transparent the problems we find with ourselves, with our classrooms and with our schools. Once found we should celebrate their finding and the person or persons who found them. To bury or hide a problem is a sign that little trust exists within the community.”*

teachers to hold high expectations for their learners if we don't hold high expectations ourselves. For teacher educators, there always exists the threat of appearing hypocritical if we cannot actually do what we attempt to teach others to do. You know the age-old complaint about the college professor who lectures about how to do cooperative learning when he has never held a class using that strategy. Because we teach teachers we are held to a higher standard. So I am asking all of us who work in the second layer, the layer of teacher development, to extend the same sympathetic disposition to interns and to our colleagues as we extend to our younger learners.

Kegan makes it clear that human development does not stop after childhood. It continues through adolescence and through adulthood on into advanced age. For as long as people are alive they have the potential for transformations of consciousness. In his book, *The Evolving Self*, Kegan explains that people continually change the way they make meaning of things. Simply stated, he claims that

people become more advanced in their own development when they come to more fully understand others. He claims that cognitive development and cognitive complexity are linked closely to moral development, and that both are related to seeing the world through the eyes of someone else. He writes about what we all know to be true instinctively – thinking and feeling spring from the same source, our common humanity. He also contends that human thought and emotion evolve in stages. These stages are influenced by a person's age and a person's experience, but also by a person's capacity for empathy. He believes, and so do I, that a sympathetic friendliness accelerates moral and cognitive development. That stance puts a burden on all who choose to take it. It requires optimism about the human spirit. It requires patience. It requires extending to all learners the benefit of the doubt. This is a stance that acknowledges there are certain phenomena that remain invisible unless a person's development is sufficient for them to see them. This is a stance that cuts both ways, for teachers and for learners.

I'd like to conclude with a few concepts that make a friendly, sympathetic stance possible. First, we all must acknowledge that problems are our friends (Fullan, 1998). We must identify, ferret out, and make transparent the problems we find with ourselves, with our classrooms and with our schools. Once found we should celebrate their finding and the person or persons who found them. To bury or hide a problem is a sign that little trust exists within the community. Second, we must try hard to puzzle out how the people with whom we work (big and small) make meaning of their world. Third, we must find a safe way to signal our teaching partner, intern or peer, that something feels wrong in our relationship. We might do that in a private note, a brief conversation, through telling another person, or, if need be, by hiring a sky writer. © Harboring ill feelings is a recipe for continuing trouble. Ill feelings dissipate only when they get air. Finally, we have to find time to laugh together. No one can deny that life in schools provides endless opportunities for comedy.

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## “Editors’ Corner”

Athene Bell, Manassas City School District  
 Kristien Zenkov, George Mason University  
 James Harmon, Euclid High School

Without question, our magazine has grown substantively over the past years, yet past performance is precisely that...completed achievement. And just as we don't often learn from things that don't matter, how can we step beyond our great achievement to engage in larger concepts and issues more deeply in order that they do matter? While there is no one-size-fits-all model for PDS partnerships, your diverse voices and stories have the power to cause an effect through the innovative work that you have done.

Recent calls for structural reform have inundated American schools. Strengthening the relationship between public schools and higher education through school-university partnerships is a significant strategy to improve education. Your stories of the value, productivity, and relevance of teacher preparation programs through the development of school-university partnerships need to be heard in order to improve education. As a writer and contributor, you can provide the critical lens for the ultimate teaching and learning of students so needed in education today. Tell us your stories of how you have provided a context for continuous and relevant change that impacts instruction through your unique school-university partnership. Send your comments and suggestions to Kristien at kzenkov@gmu.edu, to Jim at jharmon@euclid.k12.oh.us or to Athene at abell@mail.manassas.k12.va.us.

# Penn State Summer Conference for Partnerships and Professional Development Schools

*Kristen Dewitt, Penn State University*

More than 100 educators attended the Penn State Summer Conference for Partnerships and Professional Development Schools in State College, Pennsylvania this summer. The 3-day event took place at the Penn State Conference Center and Hotel from July 9–11, 2009.

The purpose of the conference was to give all members of the Professional Development School (PDS) community an opportunity to share current practices, research, and issues related to their work.

The conference encouraged conversations among new, developing, and mature PDSs and included sessions for all stakeholders, including mentors, teacher candidates, clinical faculty, and deans and directors. A feature of the conference that held great appeal was built-in planning time and comfortable meeting space for teams who wanted to prepare for 2009 and beyond. With attendees from twelve different states, concurrent sessions addressed what is taking place in PDS communities around the country. National leaders in the PDS field presented the general sessions.

The first general session was presented by Dr. Patricia Best, who retired on July 1 after serving as the superintendent of the State College Area School District for the past ten years. She had been part of the school district for more than thirty years, first as a high school teacher, then counselor, and has held several administrative positions, including assistant superintendent. Her leadership of a nationally recognized school district is based upon absolute commitment to student learning, excellence and innovation in instruction and services, and meaningful parent and community involvement. Dr. Best also serves as an adjunct faculty member in the College of Education and the College of

Health and Human Development at Penn State. The State College Area School District and Penn State initiated a fledgling partnership Professional Development School, which is just entering its second decade. The PDS has grown to include all elementary schools in the district and is the recipient of three prestigious national recognitions in the past eight years. Most recently the PDS was named recipient of the inaugural Exemplary Professional Development School Achievement Award, given by the National Association for Professional Development Schools (NAPDS), in March 2009. Dr. Best's session was titled "Sustainability: The PDS Way." She suggested that sustaining a complex, multifaceted educational initiative requires the 4 P's:

- people and partnerships that collaborate and share common goals;
- a program that focuses on students and classrooms, as well as teacher inquiry;
- products, such as inquiry conferences, that are a result of reflection and analysis; and
- passion that includes celebration and commitment to the future.

Dr. Bruce Field presented the next general session entitled "The State of the PDS Field." Dr. Field is the Executive Director of School-University Partnerships & Clinical Experiences at the University of South Carolina's College of Education. He is responsible for the overall coordination of relations between the university and schools regarding clinical experiences and facilitates that role by communicating timely and accurate information to local schools and districts. Working with USC program faculty, the

Executive Director helps establish policies and procedures for clinical experiences and ensures and facilitates the implementation of those policies and procedures. Dr. Field discussed the PDS movement by focusing on three issues: where we are, what we do well, and what we should be doing. He explained that, while Professional Development Schools are still unknown to many around the country, the number of programs is increasing due, in part, to collaboration and networking. Suggestions for what PDS programs should be doing included educating others, producing evidence of their work, and finding ways to increase funding.

Dr. Audrey Kleinsasser, director of the University of Wyoming's school-university partnerships, presented the third general session titled "Developing Leadership Capacity for Partnerships and Professional Development Schools." The Wyoming School-University Partnership brings together K–12 teachers and administrators, faculty from the University of Wyoming College of Education and the College of Arts and Sciences, and other stakeholders in the education of children and their teachers to study and promote the role of public education in preparing students for life and work in a democracy. The partnership is a member of the National Network for Education Renewal (NNER), which works to provide equal access to quality learning for all students; promote responsible stewardship of our schools and universities; and improve teaching and learning through pedagogy that nurtures and challenges all learners and provides students with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to become fully engaged participants in our democratic society. In her

*"The conference encouraged conversations among new, developing, and mature PDS's and included sessions for all stakeholders, including mentors, teacher candidates, clinical faculty, and deans and directors. A feature of the conference that held great appeal was built-in planning time and comfortable meeting space for teams who wanted to prepare for 2009 and beyond."*

*“Dr. Nolan explained the goal of PDS work, which is to sustain renewal through shared understanding, commitment and flexibility. He shared challenges that organizations face as well as and suggestions for building a demanding and collaborative culture.”*

presentation, Dr. Kleinsasser shared what she believes to be the necessary components for individuals to thrive and for organizations to change. She identified PDS partnerships as social instruments for change and emphasized the need for leaders to provide stimulation, structure and support in their organizations.

Dr. Jim Nolan presented “Important Issues in Sustaining High-Quality PDS Work,” the fourth general session. Dr. Nolan, a graduate of Penn State, is currently the Hermanowicz Professor of Education and served as Coordinator of the Elementary Professional Development School Partnership between Penn State University and the State College Area School District for nine years. He is the author of numerous articles in professional journals. Most of these articles focus on the topics of reflective supervision, professional development, and classroom management. He is

the co-author of three books: *Teacher Supervision and Evaluation: Theory into Practice* (Wiley/Jossey-Bass); *Principles of Classroom Management: A Professional Decision-Making Model* (Allyn & Bacon); and *Teachers and Educational Change: The Lived Experience of Secondary School Restructuring* (SUNY Press). Dr. Nolan explained the goal of PDS work, which is to sustain renewal through shared understanding, commitment and flexibility. He shared challenges that organizations face, as well as suggestions for building a demanding and collaborative culture.

The final general session, titled “Panel on Partnerships,” allowed participants to discuss partnership issues in detail with a panel of experts. The panel included Dr. Diane Yendol-Hoppey of West Virginia University, Dr. Nancy Dana of the University of Florida, Dr. Nolan, Dr. Best, Dr.

Kleinsasser and Dr. Field. During the session, facilitated by Dr. Bernard Badiali, the panel and participants discussed issues that include university partnerships; continuous learning; and visibility, viability, and variability of PDS programs.

The conference concluded with a Knowledge Café, a variation on Open Space Technology. This activity served to pull together all participants in discussions around important issues raised at the conference. Feedback from all participants was very positive. They liked the relaxed atmosphere, the extended sessions that allowed for meaningful conversations, the magnificent conference center facilities, and the chance to meet new colleagues. Conference planners say that they plan to make the Penn State Summer Conference an annual event. The PDS summer conference in Happy Valley was an excellent experience.

## School-University Partnerships Submission

Dr. Pam Campbell & Dr. Eva White, Co-Editors

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### Student Poster Sessions at the 2010 PDS National Conference



# Inclusion and Communication Strategies among Partners within the DREAMS Initiative: PDS Schools, Parents, and an Urban University

Lawanda Cummings and Susan Crim-McClendon, Georgia State University

## PDS Urban University-Urban School Model

Georgia State University's PDS program initiative has focused on developing and maintaining partnerships with urban schools in the four surrounding urban school systems. The aims of these partnerships include the following items: 1) increased production and retention of new teachers from underrepresented groups, 2) professional development, and 3) increased student achievement. The Alonzo A. Crim Center for Urban Educational Excellence created the DREAMS (Developing Relationships to Enhance African American Mentees' School Success) initiative to tackle the goal of student achievement by addressing known developmental risk factors of urban students. The DREAMS initiative is housed in three PDS high schools in two urban school systems.

## Program Design

DREAMS is a tiered mentoring program based on Seidman and Rappaport's (1974) educational pyramid where university faculty mentor graduate students, who mentor undergraduate students, who then mentor high school students. This model allows intensive use of the specialized knowledge of faculty members to reach a larger base of students (Albee, 1959). Using an ecological framework acknowledges students' multiple contexts of development. Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological model situates the developing person in a nested system that includes micro, meso, exo, and macro contextual levels. The transactions within partnerships are based in the mesosystem level.

DREAMS goals include the following four objectives: 1) increasing student positive identity, 2) increasing student navigational capacity in their personal, social, and academic worlds, 3) increasing exposure to occupational and educational opportunities, and 4) engaging students in their educational process. The intended outcomes include 1) increased academic performance on standardized tests, 2) increased student attendance, and 3) increased student/parent awareness of educational opportunities. DREAMS includes three phases: 1) the Summer Institute, 2) the after-school program, and 3) the bi-annual Youth Summit.

## Stakeholders

In creating a network of support to promote student success, stakeholders were identified and incorporated into programmatic processes. Stakeholders are defined as "persons directly affected by and invested in an issue" (Dalton, Elias & Wandersman, 2001). For DREAMS the stakeholders include parents, program coordinator/instructors, university partners, and community partners. Specific inclusion and communication strategies for each stakeholder were employed to ensure that program goals and objectives were addressed (see Table 1).

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Table 1: DREAMS Inclusion and Communication Strategies for Stakeholders

Parents	Coordinators/Instructors/ University Partners	Community Partners
Parent mandatory meeting for Summer Institute	Created culturally responsive lesson plans with faculty	Community specialists included in curriculum
Culmination celebration open to the entire family	Presented at research conferences	Program and curriculum evaluation
Meeting with parents for after-school program	Facilitated Youth Summit Conference on university campus	Attended university research presentations
Student-created biannual newsletter	Provided oversight in curriculum development Attended parent meetings Attended culmination celebration Program and curriculum evaluation	

Outcomes

DREAMS significantly improved students' educational achievement and social development. These gains are due to sustained mentor/mentee relationships within an intensive well-structured program. Students who were most disadvantaged or at-risk appear to benefit most from participation. Successful communication strategies emerged from participants (e.g., student presentations at a research conference, student-generated newsletters). Keeping the focus on the students reduced stakeholder conflict and enriched program processes.

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## Congratulations to the recipients of the 2010 NAPDS Award for Exemplary Professional Development School Achievement



The Indiana State University Professional Development School Partnership



The Queens University of Charlotte/ Myers Park Traditional Elementary School PDS



The Towson University -Waterloo-Ilchester-Bellows Spring Elementary Education-Special Education Dual Certification PDS



The University of South Carolina Professional Development School Network

# A Teacher Partnership Focuses on Assessment and Affects Math Mates Instruction in a Professional Development School

Mary Arth Daughrity, Eastern New Mexico University

Caron Powers, James Elementary Professional Development School

James Elementary Professional Development School (PDS) and Eastern New Mexico University (ENMU) provide actual classroom and elementary school teaching experience for college students in the ENMU Teacher Education Program; one-on-one learning experience for the children at James Elementary PDS; and an opportunity for the instructors to remain current in education by exchanging ideas about theory and practice. The National Association for Professional Development Schools (2008) stated that there are nine required essentials of a PDS and Number 4 on the list is “A shared commitment to innovation and reflective practice by all participants” (p. 5). According to Essential #4, a PDS can provide 1) educational opportunities that are improved and enhanced, 2) educational opportunities that are mutually determined by the PDS participants, 3) an environment where the theory and practice are co-mingled, and 4) an environment where the PDS serves as a learning laboratory for the development of teacher candidates (NAPDS, 2008).

This article is about two instructors with over 40 years of teaching experience between them from two different settings who have brainstormed in a professional partnership over the last four years to focus on curriculum, instruction, and assessment with a program called Math Mates. These instructors saw the potential of the equity of this partnership within the PDS to improve the learning experience for the college students and the children, as well as the instructors themselves. For Mary Arth Daughrity (ENMU) and Caron Powers (PDS), the focus was on improved assessment.

## History of the James Elementary PDS/ENMU

James Elementary PDS in Portales, New Mexico has evolved into a partnership with ENMU during the past 12 years. James Elementary is one of the 20 PDS sites in the nation to draft PDS standards at its inception. Planning for the James PDS occurred in 1994-1995 when faculty from James and Eastern New Mexico University researched the PDS concept and traveled to California to visit a PDS site that was already up and running.

In 1995, the PDS in the Portales School District provided a classroom for ENMU to hold two methods courses throughout the week: language arts/social studies and mathematics/science that each met twice a week for three hours. The Eastern classroom allowed space for students to be in an elementary setting while taking the courses. James PDS also hosted the methods students’ practicum. Some classroom teachers volunteered to do model lessons and invited the methods students into their classrooms to do activities with the children. With every PDS, there is a history of building trust and collaboration and the identification of mutual goals and interests.

In order to encourage growth in the first five years, there was approximately \$60,000 worth of grants secured from Goals 2000, the New Mexico Center for Teaching Excellence, and the ENMU College of Education & Technology. Also, the Collaborative for Excellence in Teacher Education grant and the Goals 2000 grant allowed for numerous teaching materials (e.g., FOSS Kits, mathematics manipulatives) to be purchased for teachers and faculty to use in their

classrooms.

As years went by, there was a conscious effort to increase the number of contact hours between ENMU pre-service teachers and James’ PDS students. The methods classes began meeting once a week for six hours to allow for research and theory to be taught to methods students for part of the day and for practical applications where methods students could teach children in the school for the other part of the day. Some of the teaching experiences in the math and science methods course, in particular, included the following activities: Family Math & Science Night, a community event where James students and their parents explored mathematics and science problem-solving and inquiry-based experiences designed by the methods students; Math Mates, a one-on-one exploration of mathematics concepts; science interviews to discover what children knew about science; science inquiry, a teaching and learning opportunity for students to do experiments about the world around them; learning centers, small group learning opportunities set up in the Eastern classroom or in the practicum classrooms; demonstration teaching, master teachers and/or ENMU faculty teaching a lesson in which methods students could observe and participate; children’s literature, reading storybooks with children and pulling out the mathematics and science concepts within an activity; and guided reading, reading with students in the large group.

## History of Math Mates

For many years, James PDS hosted Math Mates throughout this elementary school in different

*“These instructors saw the potential of the equity of this partnership within the PDS to improve the learning experience for the college students and the children, as well as the instructors themselves. For Mary Arth (ENMU) and Caron (PDS), the focus was on improved assessment.”*

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classrooms. In Math Mates, the methods students at ENMU spend one hour each week for five weeks teaching the children mathematics concepts one-on-one. Six years ago, Mary modeled for the methods students what they were to teach in the five sessions. After a few years passed, this structure became too rigid and did not allow for individual growth and academic exploration on the part of the methods students. Mary felt she was dictating the instruction too much.

During the recent three or four semesters that Mary and Caron worked together on Math Mates, a notion of teamwork strongly developed. Mary presented standards and benchmarks to Caron so that she would be clear on what the methods students were trying to accomplish. The methods students included objectives and assessment on the lesson plan. Caron became more active in the assessment of the instruction by the methods students. This assessment process started very informally from the classroom teacher’s perspective and soon became a large part of the process of Math Mates. The collaboration and communication between Mary and Caron elicited a true partnership within the PDS. Mary and Caron saw the potential that this collaboration could produce a more beneficial Math Mates learning experience for the methods students, children, and instructors. Improvements were made throughout the next two semesters until 2008 brought on a major overhaul of the Math Mates program in curriculum, instruction and, mostly, assessment.

In 2008, six semesters after this PDS teaching partnership began in Math Mates, Mary and Caron decided to completely review and modify the teaching, learning, and assessment process. Mary modeled once what a Math Mates lesson might look like involving patterns, and the methods students went into the classroom later that morning

with different ideas and strategies to teach patterns. Standards and benchmarks were discussed in the methods class and notations of these standards, benchmarks, and objectives were made on the lesson plan drafts. A specific assessment including review questions or formal assessment, such as a quiz, finished the lesson. Later, the methods students walked down the hall and paired up with the children from Caron’s classroom in 1:1 or 1:2 ratios. Each pair or small group found a place to sit at the desks, at the table, or in the hallway.

The methods students broke the ice a bit with a question-and-answer session about themselves and their young students to get to know each other before working with the patterns. Caron and Mary actively observed and took notes; they also offered comments to the methods students during their instruction. During this instruction time involving patterns, Caron and Mary would often meet a half a dozen times and discuss what they observed. The instruction time lasted approximately 45 minutes, after which the methods students said their good-byes and promised to return the next week.

While Mary returned with the methods students to the Eastern classroom, Caron began the process of a Plus/Delta and asked her young students what they liked and what they learned, as well as what they wished they could change. In the meantime, Mary debriefed the methods students, confidentially, about what they learned about their student’s or students’ learning abilities, problem solving capabilities, and their own instruction. Mary asked questions such as, “How did you think your teaching went? How do you know this? Did your student(s) learn anything and how can you tell?” After about 20 minutes, Caron entered the Eastern classroom (the children in music class) with the children’s Plus/Delta in hand on a large piece of sticky

notepaper. Mary read through the comments from the children from which Caron asked inquiring and in-depth questions. Comments listed on the Plus/Delta began a new discussion about curriculum, instruction, and assessment dealing with patterns. Caron took time to add comments of her own, a debriefing of sorts from the classroom teacher’s perspective. Some of her comments included, “I liked that you were having grand conversations....You were using appropriate vocabulary.... These activities apply to real life.” And she also commented, “A few of you started with activities that were too difficult....try to use more manipulatives....watch your grammar.”

This Math Mates process continued for four more weeks. These weeks included two weeks of basic probability, one week of geometry and spatial reasoning, and one week of paper-pencil and manipulative problem solving. Mary and Caron carefully chose words and statements that communicated with the methods students well. The two instructors addressed misconceptions and the need for re-teaching when appropriate. Methods students set goals for assessment based on prior assessments (e.g., children’s Plus/Deltas, Mary and Caron’s debriefing).

#### An Unexpected Learning Opportunity with Assessment

Week two and week three of Math Mates in 2008 brought an unexpected learning opportunity with assessment for the methods students. Week two involved an introduction of basic probability (NCTM, 2000). After talking in great detail and doing a few K-2 level activities, the methods students chose from some of the modeled activities and also brought their own teaching ideas to the Eastern classroom. The methods students reviewed their ideas in small groups. The activities came from the textbook, *Teaching*

and *Learning Mathematics: Pre-Kindergarten Through Middle School*, (5th edition Sheffield & Cruikshank, 2005), the Internet, and the ENMU campus library educational resource center.

The methods students reviewed the standards and benchmarks and appropriate vocabulary to discuss the common math terms likely and unlikely (i.e. probably, might, could). After the methods students taught and Mary debriefed with them, Caron came into the Eastern classroom with the children's Plus/Delta. The children stated on the Plus/Delta chart that "likely means it's going to happen; unlikely means it's never going to happen." The methods students, Mary, and Caron discussed this misconception, and Mary reminded the methods students of the need for vocabulary such as "probably, might, could" which needed to be used during the next week in order to help reinforce the concept of likely and unlikely with the children.

When the methods students returned the following week at the same time, they came with activities to re-teach, as well as to provide enrichment. After Math Mates, Caron came into the Eastern classroom with the children's Plus/Delta chart when the second week's lessons were completed. This time, to the great happiness of the methods students, Mary, and Caron, the chart stated, "likely means it could happen...[we can use words like] possibility, likely, unlikely, probability, could might, predict." Also, Caron commented that the children's mathematics conceptual understanding of likely and unlikely increased noticeably. As a matter of fact, when Caron taught probability in her classroom a month later, she commented to Mary and the methods students that she was able to go into greater

depth because of what the Math Mates experience brought her students and their conceptual understanding of the topic. The children reminded Caron, "This is what we did with our [Math Mates] teachers!"

Due to this assessment process, the methods students and both instructors caught the misconceptions prior to the next Math Mates session. The teachers became aware of the gap in understanding through the instructors' observations, but mostly from the children's own words on the Plus/Delta chart. The 2008 experience proved to increase vocabulary and provide opportunities for more in-depth understanding more than any other previous semester. Caron and Mary agreed the assessment process from 2008 kept the communication and vocabulary at an all-time high.

#### A Post Assessment of the Children's Abilities in Math Mates

At the end of the Math Mates experience, Caron and Mary asked the methods students to compose a brief, one-page, typed mathematics assessment of the student(s) they taught in Math Mates. The focus and purpose of this post-assessment was to communicate with Caron, the classroom teacher (and Mary). Caron asked them to be thorough about the children's abilities in the Math Mates lessons and process the assessment like a classroom teacher. Caron asked them to 1) discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the student(s); 2) communicate the overall assessment of the child's mathematics skills—ranking excellent, good, or poor; and 3) suggest to Caron interventions, re-teaching, and enrichment for the future concerning the child(ren) they taught in Math Mates. Only Caron and Mary read the

information from the Math Mates post-assessments for the children.

#### Conclusions

Due to the many conversations and collaborations of Mary and Caron, the Math Mates program improved and assessment additions became commonplace. By focusing on assessments, instructors could analyze the children's and the methods students' abilities. The assessment of skills by the methods students allowed for a great intervention strategy for each child in the James PDS classroom. This teaching and assessment process provided greater evidence of scaffolding and created positive and honest assessment.

Everyone involved reaped benefits from the newly revamped Math Mates program. The children enjoyed the one-on-one experiences in learning mathematics. ENMU methods students benefited from the opportunity to work with children during their education to become teachers. James PDS and ENMU helped create opportunities for the methods students to become better teachers because of the practical, real life experiences in the teaching and assessment. The various points of view from the instructors allowed for greater understanding of the teaching process. Caron benefited from Math Mates because this assessment process reinforced her assessment of the children's mathematical abilities, and Mary benefited by working with a classroom teacher and staying current in education. Both Caron and Mary grew professionally through their teamwork, realizing that this worthy collaboration produced excellent communication within the PDS partnership and improved teaching, learning, and assessment.

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