

# PDS Partners

The Official Magazine of the National Association for Professional Development Schools

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## A Message From the President

*Judy Beiter, Anne Arundel County Public Schools, MD*

During my presidency this past year, I have been bestowed a gift...a gift of colleagues who spanned international lines all with a heartfelt desire to enhance teacher preparation through the Professional Development School model! Conversations with these exceptional educators brought me to the realization that we all have knowledge and expertise to bring to the table as exemplar sites do exist. One discussion prompted the question respective of what it is that I do as Manager of College University Partnerships in Anne Arundel County Public Schools of Maryland with PDS. In other words, how does NAPDS connect with my daily work?

For me it is an easy answer so I smile and share that providing oversight for forty-six designated PDS sites; elementary, middle, and high schools - across our 10 different partnership institutions of higher education, each with their own distinct conceptual frameworks and beliefs, that NAPDS serves as a lifeline for me while I grow the PDS programming in my school district.

The association serves as an advocate for the educational community that is dedicated to promoting the continuous development of relationships and to create and sustain genuine collaborative partnerships between P-12 schools and institutions of higher education. It functions as a collaborative unit to support and advocate for continuing partnerships across the P-12/institution of higher education community as a center for the discovery and sharing of knowledge that shapes educator leadership and practice.

The association provides a network of support, as well as responders, when another situational lens or advice is needed. We share the knowledge that a PDS partnership involves a collaborative relationship with a college or university. And that the purpose of the PDS is to increase student achievement by providing professional development opportunities for pre-service interns, mentor teachers, other school faculty and college/university partners. It is in this partnership that the school, school system and college/university partners work together to provide resources to meet the school's identified improvement goals and objectives.

One of the foundational steps for the designated school site is the establishment of a coordinating council that serves as the organizing body for the development and implementation of all aspects of the PDS community. This coordinating council meets monthly to address concerns regarding student internships, plan professional development opportunities, monitor the day-to day operation of the PDS and monitor progress in relation to the school's strategic plan. The PDS has a shared mission that is jointly defined and mutually supported by the institution of higher education and the school. Mentoring programs are beneficial to both sides of the partnership. The PDS recognizes and supports the distinct learning needs of all partners (faculty/staff, interns and students). And so, all PDS stakeholders accept responsibility and are held accountable for upholding professional standards for preparing and renewing teachers.

My term as your president has been exuberant and yet has humbled me. I thank you from the bottom of my soul and respect what you do in your daily work as we prepare the next generation of teachers.



# Coaching the reflective practitioner: A new way of fostering independent learning for teacher candidates while in a PDS setting

*Aiyana Henry, Baylor University*

*Bettye Keathley, Mountainview Elementary*

*“Coaching has become an important concept in teacher education ... it can improve teaching, student learning, and provides opportunities for teachers to consciously practice their profession while reflecting on their practice.”*

Sport coaches can be some of the most influential people in a person’s life. How can we implement what coaches do on a daily basis on the court or playing field in the classroom to help our students? Coaching has become an important concept in teacher education and, while still relatively new, it is seen by some as one of the most promising approaches in professional learning (Barkley, 2005; Knight, 2009). Barkley (2005) defines coaching as “an opportunity for two individuals to enter into an ongoing dialogue and relationship, the focus of which is to improve skills, techniques, and behaviors that lead to professional and personal success” (p.39). Coaching can improve teaching, student learning, and provide opportunities for teachers to consciously practice their profession while reflecting on their practice. It is important for teacher educators to look for new ways to provide additional support for our teacher candidates. Coaching gives teacher candidates the time and support to think metacognitively about their work in a safe atmosphere. While being coached, it is important that the candidate feels safe to make mistakes and it is the job of the coach to not be judgmental when these mistakes are made. Coaching enables teacher candidates to work on specific issues that they need or want to work on while providing opportunities for feedback and practice.

Being able to reflect and learning how to reflect requires a lot of work; however, reflecting on your teaching has been reported to have many benefits for teachers and teacher candidates (Cruickshank, Jenkins, & Metcalf, 2009; Richert, 1990). I was in my second

year as the University Liaison at Mountainview Elementary Professional Development School (Waco, Texas) and kept thinking about the importance of providing multiple opportunities and experiences for our candidates to reflect on their practice. As the University Liaison, I was responsible for facilitating communication with the university and the PDS. I taught a three-our credit course held on site, which included teaching a one-hour seminar and supervising the junior level field experience that took place four days a week. This field experience focused on small group instruction in math and literacy. The neat thing about this combined experience was that I was able to reflect with all of the students in both large and small group seminar settings, while also being able to observe individual candidates while they were teaching. I coached each individual candidate when conferencing about lesson plans, electronic portfolios, and observations.

The coaching process implemented involved: modeling best practices for the candidates, encouraging the candidates to make their teaching visible when writing lesson plans, assigning required weekly reflections, and changing the way observations were performed. For example, in the past each candidate had a specific time that they were observed teaching a lesson, the observer would document the lesson, and shortly after the observer would debrief the lesson with the candidate. After reflecting on our old observation process, the Site-based Coordinator and I decided to implement a new method that involved three steps: a pre-conference, observation, and reflective conference. In

the pre-conference, the coach (observer) met with the teacher candidate prior to the lesson being taught. The coach asked specific, facilitated, open-ended questions, asked the candidate to identify the main objectives, to be precise about what they were looking for in terms of outcomes, and to clearly identify what activities should be used to support those outcomes. Next, the coach observed the lesson that had been discussed during the pre-conference. Lastly, a reflective conference was conducted where more questions were asked. With the use of facilitated questions, the coach was able to lead the candidate through the conference, allowing them to explain what had occurred and what they learned from their experiences. The teacher candidate was able to reflect on what was taught, the effectiveness of what was taught, whether or not their expectations were met and most importantly, identify how they could improve their teaching in future lessons. The candidate was able to identify if goals were met and set new goals.

Research tells us that effective teachers are enthusiastic about what they teach and know how to actively engage their students. These teachers assess often to meet the needs of their students, establish clear expectations, provide continuous feedback, and have high standards for themselves and their students (Cruickshank, Jenkins, & Metcalf, 2009). They look for ways to improve their individual growth as teachers; they participate in professional development, and are reflective practitioners. Keeping in mind that PDS schools were developed to create in-depth experiences that help build the confidence of

the teacher candidate and develop the skills necessary to handle daily occurrences encountered in teaching, we hoped to utilize a coaching process that would maximize those experiences. As per NAPDS Essential 4, we were committed to innovative and reflective practice. Our ultimate goal was to produce teachers who were prepared to make decisions, reflect on their practice and have the ability to interpret and improve their practice. By coaching teacher candidates and encouraging them to continue to think about their thinking while consciously reflecting on their

practice, teacher candidates will become more self-prescriptive and develop an interdependence which will maximize their individual growth.

One of the most important responsibilities as a teacher educator is to make sure that each teacher candidate has the skills necessary to become a highly effective teacher. It is important that we continue to search for the most effective ways to prepare our teacher candidates and to be able to prove that our methods used have had a positive impact on their learning. I believe that reflection

does play a key role in developing teacher candidates, and if paired with coaching, teacher candidates will develop the skills necessary to become reflective thinkers and most importantly highly effective teachers.

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## Creating Coherence through Aligned Clinical Placements

*Jody Guarino, University of California Irvine*

*Marie Sykes, Capistrano Unified School District*

Creating coherence within teacher preparation programs and mitigating dissonance between theory and practice is a common challenge among many teacher education programs (Grossman, Hammerness, McDonald, & Ronfeldt, 2008). Researchers argue the contradictions between theory and practice can inhibit students' ability to learn new practices and develop an understanding of teaching and learning (Guyton & McIntyre, 1990; Zeichner & Liston, 1987). Oftentimes this mismatch is evident between practices proposed by the university and those seen in clinical settings. With incongruence between university coursework and teaching practices observed in the field, pre-service teachers often are placed at the center of conflict. Borko and Putnam (1996) explained, "The public school settings in which prospective teachers first try their hands at classroom teaching may do little to support or reinforce ideas presented in their university teacher education programs"

(p.700). How can the competing worlds be bridged?

We believe some of this dissonance may be mitigated by placing pre-service teachers in aligned fieldwork assignments at partnership schools. We will briefly share the perceptions of Jenny, a pre-service teacher in a one-year teacher preparation program. Jenny began the multiple subject credential program in the fall quarter, September 2011, enrolled in a variety of methods courses and was assigned to an upper elementary grade classroom where she would spend two days a week observing for sixteen weeks. The following quarter, she would complete her first ten-week student teaching assignment in the same classroom. Throughout this traditional instruction placement, Jenny completed a two-quarter math methods course. A foundation of the course was learning to learn from one's teaching, centered on the idea that if teachers analyze and reflect on their teaching in

productive ways, their practice will continue to improve over time. Course foci included the use of rich mathematical tasks, teacher questioning to probe and extend student thinking, student discourse and making connections within and between mathematical concepts. The course was taught at a partnership school, affording students with opportunities to observe model lessons, conduct mini lessons with elementary students, and engage in practicum experiences. At the end of Jenny's first quarter, she reflected on her experience in the math methods course:

...my main question coming out of this quarter is what to do after "a day in the life" of a (math) lesson. While this quarter has taught us extreme leaps and bounds about cognitively guided instruction and how to maximize student learning and understanding through student-invented strategies and student-

*"With incongruence between university coursework and teaching practices observed in the field, pre-service teachers often are placed at the center of conflict. Perhaps, aligned clinical placements can support pre-service teachers to bridge the gap between theory and practice."*

centered discussions, I feel next quarter, it'd be helpful to know what to do the day "after" a "day in the life." The examples we read in Making Sense, and the observation of Mrs. Syke's lesson helped show us great ways to "teach/facilitate" a (math) lesson, but when my mentor teacher (who is also just learning how to introduce this into her own classroom) asked me what to do the next day/lesson, I didn't know how to answer. Do we continue with a similar problem? Do we use a similar problem with harder numbers? Do we review the strategies we saw in the previous lesson? Do we start a new topic/ a new lesson? It'd be great to see "a week in the life" next quarter!

Her reflection illustrates her struggle to make sense of and apply ambitious mathematics teaching and learning proposed within her coursework.

Upon completion of the two quarter math methods course and her first student teaching assignment, Jenny was placed in a second grade classroom at Chaparral Elementary, a UCI partnership school with a shared commitment to innovative and reflective practice by all participants (NAPDS Essential Four), and assigned to mentor teacher Marie Sykes. Mrs. Sykes' instructional practices model the practices proposed by the university and, as such, her room is a frequent site of demonstration lessons for UCI students. Jenny observed one of those lessons.

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During this placement, Jenny observed and collaborated with her mentor teacher in the planning and implementation of student-centered, problem-based mathematics instruction. She learned how to set learning objectives by breaking down the critical understandings children needed to develop. Asking students probing and clarifying questions, actively listening to student thinking, and analyzing student work in progress, on a daily basis, served as the pacing guide in planning the next day's instruction. It was during this second placement that Jenny experienced a turning point in her understanding of her math methods coursework. She explained,

I remember asking myself, "Why did this feel so much different...so much more successful?" The students were so engaged and were making extensive connections and predictions, far beyond any that were made in previous lessons. I came to realize that the critical difference, beyond the concrete observations and experiences I was having every day in this environment, was that just giving a student a physical manipulative and asking "why" questions isn't enough. This instructional approach isn't about making a checklist of things "not to forget" while teaching. You have to let the kids explore and construct meaning on their own. My fault, I realized, was that in my prior lessons, I thought I was scaffolding their learning by walking them through (the patterns they

notice) in an "I do, we do, you do" manner. I thought asking the students to predict what would happen was getting students to think about the math, make connections, and make predictions. Really, all I was doing was giving them procedures and waiting for the right answer.

With the support of her mentor teacher, Jenny was becoming a reflective practitioner, analyzing and reflecting on her practice through the lens of student learning, and mitigating the dissonance between theory and practice; growth she attributes to her student teaching placement;

Having had the fortunate opportunity to personally experience the instructional practices we'd analyzed and researched for so long in our methods courses was finally making sense, but it would never have become fully realized had I not seen it first-hand, every day, in a classroom setting strongly centered around this kind of teaching.

Perhaps, aligned clinical placements can support pre-service teachers to bridge the gap between theory and practice.

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# Weathering The Storm: How a Traditional Magnet School Program Is Working To Refine Curriculum and Share Its Identity to Help Prevent School Closure

*Suzanne Horn, Queens University of Charlotte*

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*Susan Smith, Elizabeth Traditional Elementary School*

During the current economic climate where school boards are tasked with making difficult choices of laying off teachers and closing schools, it is important to ring your own bell, to state why your school is valuable and should remain open to the public. During this past school year both of our PDS partner elementary schools were on the list of possible schools chosen for closure. We were surprised as both schools are diverse and show success with students.

In our state the overall average of student growth for the 09/10 school year was 80% and the county school district average was 82.8%. Myers Park Traditional School (MPTS) showed an overall growth of 84.9% and Elizabeth Traditional Elementary School (ETS) exceeded the state average but was slightly under the county with an overall growth of 81.5%. The county average for students at or above grade level was 75.2%; for MPTS it was 87.7% and ETS 85.8%. In the specific area of reading, the county average of students at or above grade level was 70.2%. At MPTS it was 86.4% and at ETS 79.8%. The disparity between racial/ethnic groups in reading in the county on average was 33%. Both MPTS at 30% and ETS at 23.6% were lower than average in the disparity. Both schools were also lower than the county's average (31%) of disparity of reading based on socioeconomic disadvantage. At MPTS this disparity was lower with 25.5% and at ETS it was lower still with only a 15% difference. So both schools were working diligently to close the achievement gap. (Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools, 2011).

As with any important issue, we handled the news of a possible school closure with our established procedures as PDS partners. We met as a group with teachers and principals from each school and the PDS coordinator from the university to brainstorm reasons for possible closure after the principals had queried school board members and officers in the county office. Several reasons were discussed, but the focus for the partners to work through was that the community was misunderstanding what a traditional magnet school actually was. We were also concerned that not all of the teachers at the schools could thoroughly articulate the meaning of the concept of traditional schooling and struggled as to how that related to the methods choices in their instruction and the articulation of those decisions to parents.

Our concern was that when the community heard the name traditional that they felt the school teachers centered on only using a blackboard and chalk and were stern in discipline. How the traditional magnet is different from a standard school in this county is as follows:

Students are taught in a structured environment and are held accountable to a high standard of conduct and academics. This program values the best of the past: manners, a strong foundation in the basics, classroom rituals and procedures, allegiance to the traditions, interests and ideals of the diverse American culture, civics, and citizenship. Some special features are the PDS partnership, study skills instruction, manners

curriculum, study of Greek and Latin roots, full time science instruction, six week report cards (with a focus on character, work and study habits, and suggestions for success), and an emphasis on responsibility to self, community, and family (Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools, 2011).

The team began to brainstorm how the traditional method was reflected in daily instruction and how we could get the message out to parents. We used NAPDS Essential #3, ongoing and reciprocal professional development, for all participants guided by need. Through staff development in this first year of the project we focused on literacy instruction and how that instruction looked in a traditional school. A team leader was selected for each grade at both schools. That person was responsible for working in their grade at their own school to brainstorm with colleagues about that month's given topic. The grade leaders would then report back to a monthly meeting of team leaders and administrators from both schools. Each pairing would share what they learned with the group so that all parties could learn from all ideas. The teachers worked together to create a book that contained a matrix for each grade level, listing for each instructional objective, several teaching methods, sample lessons that reflected the traditional school ideals, sample ideas and how the traditional method being used for that objective could be communicated home to parents. (See Figure One). We felt this work would help the teachers clearly understand and articulate

*"As with any important issue, we handled the news of a possible school closure with our established procedures as PDS partners. "*

the traditional method to parents. The book itself was a great tool for current teachers to use as a resource and for newly hired teachers to use as a tool to understand the traditional method and have as a model when deciding what types of methods to use in their own classroom lessons. The exciting thing to the university professor was that every teacher in both schools was involved, so the book was more likely to be valued and used as a resource.

All parties felt that the tool created in the staff development was useful. Meetings were held so parents could further explore what the traditional magnet school was

and how instruction looked at these schools. Parents organized and attended school board meetings to speak on behalf of the schools' value to the county. Both schools did make it through the year without being subjected to closure. The issue of staying open and not reappearing on a list of possible school closures is being addressed on many fronts. Like any of us in this tenuous time of education, we are not exactly sure what comes next. Whatever the challenge, we feel comfortable that in a difficult time we held together as a cohesive team of teachers, administrators, university personnel, and parents, surviving this round of budget cuts. To us, this project exemplified how

we embrace NAPDS Essential #7, a structure that allows all participants a forum for ongoing governance, reflection, and collaboration.

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Figure One: Sample of Kindergarten Matrix

Essential Standards Chart: What is it we expect students to learn?							
Grade:	K	Subject:	Literacy	Semester:	2010-2011	Team Members:	
Standard/Description	Example/Rigor	Prior Skills Needed	Common Assessment	When Taught?	Enrichment		
What is the essential standard to be learned? Describe in student-friendly vocabulary.	What does proficient student work look like? Provide an example and/or description	What prior knowledge, skills and/or vocabulary is/are needed for a student to master this standard	What assessment(s) will be used to measure student mastery?	When will this standard be taught?	What will we do when students have learned the essential standard(s)		
Pre-Reading Skills	Book and Print Awareness	-front and back of book -return sweep -beginning and end of stories -where to start reading/page	-initial testing -observation -continued assessment until mastery	-ongoing (start at beginning of year)	-Provide varied texts/materials -extend vocabulary (illustrator, author)		
Communication Skills Retell/ Oral Comprehension	Speak in a complete sentence -being able to identify the needs and wants -retell/ summarize and sequence	-conversational skills -listening skills -reading with parents/ preschool -socialization skills	-informal retell -class participation -letterbook stories	-literacy time -continuous modeling/ practice throughout the day	-enhance vocabulary -use them as an example -connecting to self, text, world, other students		
Letter ID & Letter Sounds	Able to identify all letters and sounds.	-concept of a letter -ability to make and discriminate a sound	-letterbook -DiBELS -teacher quarterly assessments -formatives	-meet benchmark for assessments	-blend sounds into word -segmenting		
Relates Drawing & Writing	Writing and drawing need to reflect one another	-hold a pencil -prior exposure to text -life experiences	-journals -work samples	-throughout the year	-more detail in pictures and text -elaboration		

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# Exploring the Signature Pedagogy of Pre-service Teacher Learning in Partnership-Based Teacher Education

*Yvonne Franco, Andrea Gelfuso, Julia Hagge, Danielle Dennis, Audra Parker, & Diane Yendol-Hoppey, University of South Florida*

*Judi Fernandez, Rebecca Powell and Jennifer Ward, Hillsborough County Public Schools*

During the 2011-2012 academic year, we conducted an exhaustive review of the articles published in *School-University Partnerships* (2003-2011). Stimulating this review was our wondering, “What are our current research-based, signature pedagogical practices for high-quality, partnership-based teacher preparation represented in our organization’s journal?” This focus on identifying the signature pedagogy of professional preparation has been a question receiving increased attention across the professions (Shulman, 2005).

The development of signature pedagogy is embodied in NAPDS Essential 2 which describes a school–university culture committed to the preparation of future educators that embraces pre-service teachers’ active engagement in the school community. One element of culture is the “rituals” activities or practices that the community engages in to assure high quality preparation of future educators. Signature pedagogy is a term used to refer to the activities or practices that become a part of our PDS-based teacher education.

According to Shulman (2005), signature pedagogical experiences developmentally prepare professionals to act, perform, and practice within their chosen profession. Just as in medicine, teaching candidates’ performance as professionals requires incorporating pedagogies of uncertainty, engagement and formation into preparation. For example, pedagogies of uncertainty help pre-service teachers understand that teaching requires making decisions and acting under complex conditions of uncertainty and ambiguity. Pedagogies of engagement

acknowledge that learning about teaching requires learning through practice. Finally, pre-service teachers must learn routinization of analysis and habits of the mind that shape their identity, character dispositions and values (Shulman 2005). These routines and habits are referred to as pedagogies of formation. We wondered, “To what extent are partnership-based teacher education programs comprised of a set of pedagogical experiences that specifically reflect these characteristics of uncertainty, engagement and formation?”

This review of the literature began with an analysis of each article published in *School-University Partnerships*. Given that the journal began publication in 2007, at the time of this analysis 4 volumes, 8 journals, and 79 articles had been published. Welcome Remarks, President’s Perspectives, Editorial Notes and NAPDS Organizational Commentaries were not included in the analysis since we were interested in reviewing the articles as representing the voices of the field. These 79 articles clustered into eight categories, with 20 articles representing instructional activities designed for pre-service teachers that could inform our understanding of signature pedagogy. Important to note is that although the term signature pedagogy is emerging as a characteristic of learning within a variety of professions (e.g., medicine, law, education), the term is not yet a part of the vernacular of partnership-based teacher education. Thus, we did not expect that signature pedagogy as a term would explicitly emerge within our review of the articles. Within those 20 articles, we identified 6 types of pedagogical practices that could likely inform and create conversation about partnership-

based signature pedagogy. These practices included: (1) integrated course content, assignments, and teaching; (2) observation of teaching by pre-service teachers; (3) mentoring and coaching that includes observation of pre-service teachers by other educators; (4) co-teaching; (5) inquiry, and (6) reflection on teaching. Of the 20 articles that contained pedagogical practices, only 5 of the articles were research studies, with the remaining 15 considered descriptive. Additionally, only one of the 5 research studies specifically focused on understanding the influence of a specific pedagogical practice on pre-service teacher learning.

After analyzing the articles, we returned to Shulman’s work and specifically analyzed each pedagogy to determine whether the practice reflected pedagogies of engagement, formation, and uncertainty. Although not explicitly developed in the articles, one or more of the characteristics (e.g., engagement, formation and uncertainty) could be inferred, suggesting that these pedagogies may be powerful vehicles for pre-service teacher professional preparation.

Additionally, we examined each article’s descriptions of the pedagogical practices. Few articles provided enough details to thoroughly illustrate surface, deep and implicit structures that define the pedagogy. For example, more details were needed to allow the reader to understand the observable and operational features of the pedagogy that are referred to as surface structures. Additionally, little attention was given to describing the deep structures consisting of the assumptions about the practice

*“The development of signature pedagogy is embodied in NAPDS Essential 3 which describes a school university culture committed to the preparation of future teachers that embraces pre-service teachers’ active engagement in the school community. Signature pedagogy is a term used to refer to the activities or practices that become a part of our PDS-based teacher education.”*

and how to best prioritize value and impart knowledge. Finally, insufficient consideration was given to delineating the implicit structures that reflect the core set of beliefs about professional attitudes, values and dispositions. Findings from the review of the literature suggest that although we have shared important activities that our partnership-based teacher preparation programs uniquely engage in, as an area of educational research we have not yet clearly developed a set of research-based, signature pedagogical tools that define the signature pedagogical practices of partnership-based teacher preparation. Establishing signature pedagogical tools for partnership-based teacher education will require us to not only specifically describe the surface, deep and implicit characteristics of the practice, but also provide a research base that articulates the power of the practice for teacher preparation.

Across the nation, teacher preparation programs vary greatly in their “scope and structure” (Hansen, 2008). These program inconsistencies threaten our profession, as they produce educators varying in levels of ability and skill development. Shulman begins with a critique of teacher education that we have known for years:

It’s very hard to learn to practice without powerful,

consistent models of practice that we can study deeply, that we engage with deeply, that we can reflect on deeply, and over which we have some control with regard to quality and character. If you had to design a system to violate all those principles, you would have designed traditional student teaching. Every candidate is assigned to a different place; there is enormous uncertainty about what they’re going to see, what they’re going to do, and how their own learning and performance will be monitored and guided. (Shulman, 2005, P. 16)

In this quote, Shulman identifies a perennial void in teacher education that has been relatively ignored during the last few decades, even in light of decades of on-going attention to the importance of clinical experiences in teacher preparation.

Today, the PDS community has adopted shared standards to define the scope and structure of our work through the NAPDS 9 essentials and NCATE PDS Standards, which help limit this variation as we recognize the importance of learning to teach within a partnership. By working within and across partnerships to establish signature pedagogy of our partnership work, we would be empowered to address Shulman’s critique related to the tremendous

variation in teacher preparation that exists today. We are uniquely positioned to identify research-based practices that set partnership-based teacher preparation apart from other pathways to teacher certification.

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# Engaging 21st Century Learners

Andrea Berry and Jan Faile, Lake Carolina Elementary School  
Margo Jackson, University of South Carolina

In order to meet the needs of 21st-century learners, it is incumbent upon us as P-12 educators to change the way we are teaching our students and preparing our teacher candidates. Our students are requiring that we keep pace with them in an ever-changing global society comprised of “digital natives.” Those of us who have been in education for more than a decade have seen rapid changes in this information age. Our current focus is designing work for our students, which is both engaging and relevant to their world.

Lake Carolina Elementary is a Professional Development School in partnership with the University of South Carolina. Lake Carolina has a history of maintaining a culture of excellence steeped in the most current research for meeting student needs. From 2009 to 2011, our teacher candidates were involved in a PDS collaborative book study focusing on brain-based teaching strategies, *Ignite: Research-Based Strategies to Ignite Student Learning* by Judy Willis. This text complemented our school’s focus on HET (Highly Effective Teaching) and gave us some practical strategies that we were able to present at faculty meetings and implement in our classroom teaching practices. We have recently added to our knowledge base through our current book study using Philip Schlechty’s *Engaging Students: The Next Level of Working on*

*the Work*. These studies address two of the NAPDS “Nine Essentials” – elements 2 and 3: a school-university culture committed to teacher preparation and active engagement (2) and ongoing reciprocal professional development guided by need (3). The needs and interests of our learning community guide our decisions when selecting texts for our research studies and principles to be implemented into our daily practice.

The following topics were included in our presentation at the 2012 PDS National Conference in Las Vegas, “Turning the Odds in Your Favor with Student Engagement,” as examples of how our teacher candidates are prepared and are fully engaged in all facets of a world class clinical experience at our school:

- **Building Community:** A teacher candidate describes her experiences with morning meeting (town hall) and group activities in which students get to know each other and their teacher better. “Getting to know your who” is an integral part of the Schlechty framework.
- **Classroom Procedures:** We shared examples of ways that teacher candidates are directed to use written procedures for learning clubs and all classroom lessons involving movement, interaction with peers, etc. to ensure smooth transitions and successful experiences for students.
- **Best Practices:** Our teacher candidates videotaped their experiences in our science lab working with students to create habitats for their African tree frogs. The use of written procedures, silent cues, and assigned jobs in the learning clubs was demonstrated as vital in such an actively engaging environment.
- **Collegial Partnership:** Our teacher candidates participate in all aspects of the school community’s events and programs. For example, pictures of teacher candidates at Family Art Night were shared depicting collaboration among students, their families, teachers, and other teacher candidates.
- **Knowing Your Who:** Teacher candidates shared examples of a 21st-century method for “student of the week” by sending the flip video camera home with students, which enabled them to share video footage of their family life. They also shared interest inventories used with students to gain insight and address individual needs.
- **Infusing Innovative Technology:** Our teacher candidates constantly use technology within their classrooms. Our first graders created paper slide videos of

“... it is incumbent upon us as P-12 educators to change the way we are teaching our students and preparing our teacher candidates. With our ongoing collaboration in the PDS Network, we are sure to meet these challenges ...”

## School-University Partnerships Submissions

Kristien Zenkov, Senior Editor, George Mason University

Submissions and any inquiries regarding past submissions can be made to:  
supjournal@gmail.com

Manuscript Submission Guidelines can be found at [www.napds.org](http://www.napds.org)

the life cycle of a pumpkin. Another example involves a teacher candidate facilitating her fourth grade students in creating a multi-media alphabet book depicting alliteration. All of our classrooms are equipped with SMART Boards, and grades 4 and 5 have one-to-one computing. Third grade will also begin one-to-one computing within the next year.

In the fall of 2012, we will implement year two of our three-year research cycle, in which we will begin the action phase. Our research question is, "What are the positive outcomes that 21st-century

learners experience as a result of engaging and relevant learning opportunities?" Our teacher candidates will be an integral part of developing assessment tools for measuring student engagement. As we design meaningful work for our students, it is imperative that we also assess the effectiveness of the work in which they are engaged and the products that they produce. Student surveys, student interviews, and exit slips have allowed us to glean valuable feedback from our learners. The current challenge is to create instruments that will give us measurable data to chart our progress going forward. With

our ongoing collaboration in the PDS Network, we are sure to meet these challenges and others as we continue to sail beyond excellence at Lake Carolina Elementary.

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## The Barnegat/Monmouth Connection - A High School Redesign

*Harvey R. Allen, Monmouth University  
Joe Saxton, Barnegat High School*

The Barnegat/Monmouth partnership was established to support the redesign efforts of Barnegat High School. One of the primary goals was to change any negative perceptions of the high school that might exist. Test scores were great and students were achieving many academic and athletic honors, but the negative perception was still there.

Dr. Saxton, the principal of Barnegat, began the redesign process by gathering data regarding the teachers' sense of efficacy and occupational health, as well as examining the number and types of discipline referrals that were occurring. After gathering the data, it was evident that there was a breakdown in communication and a need to create a sense of ownership in what was happening in the school. The next step in the process was to establish a professional development team supported by Monmouth University. During the first year it was the responsibility of the administration and the team to work with all staff in establishing a new mission statement:

•Barnegat High School, in partnership with our community, will provide a safe, innovative, and nurturing school environment where students are valued and treated with dignity and respect as the staff prepares and engages them in meaningful, differentiated learning experiences that will promote social responsibility and cultivate future academic and workforce success.

The partnership realized that the design that was currently in place would not continue to attain the same results (Fullan, 2007). Dr. Saxton and Dr. Allen discussed the fact that now that the vision/mission was developed, it would be necessary to emphasize consistent ongoing professional development that emphasized learning and focused on reflective practice and the whole child. The partnership examined a meta-analysis of 22 different studies published in the Administration Quarterly in December 1, 2008, entitled "The Impact of Leadership on Student Outcomes: An Analysis of the Differential Effects of

Leadership Types," which stated that promoting and participating in teacher learning and development had the greatest effect on student learning/engagement.

Once the mission statement was established by all stakeholders, it became the professional development team's responsibility, with the support of the university, to establish professional learning communities that focused on professional development geared to engaging students in meaningful learning and creating a positive learning environment conducive to teaching and learning. The school district authorized 8 delayed openings for this purpose. The delayed opening structure enabled teachers to come in at their regular time and students to come in 2 hours later. During those 2 hours teachers engaged in professional development. The following are examples of the topics for the sessions: Simple Differentiated Instructional Techniques, Engaging Students in Active Learning Behavioral Management, Brain-Based Teaching and Learning, Planning in a Block,

*"Barnegat High School in partnership with Monmouth University is well on the way to fulfilling Tim Westerberg's Six Strategies and One Attitude (2009) for becoming a great high school."*

and Classroom Management. The university provided the professional development team with resources, research, and feedback during the professional development sessions. It was during this time that the university worked with Dr. Saxton to provide ideas and suggestions regarding the implementation of a public relations plan that consistently connected the school to vital stakeholders and regularly highlighted the achievement and accomplishments of staff and students. This helped the high school community create and promote a positive culture and adhere to the premise that Michael Copland and Michael Knapp state in their book *Connecting Leadership with Learning: A Framework for Reflection, Planning and Action*, that schools become stronger by building

effective relationships with the community and by identifying and securing resources that they can provide.

The approach taken by Dr. Allen, the representative of the university in the partnership, was one of “as needed” support, access to current research and best practices, and feedback regarding each professional development session. The high school took the initiative to make the needed changes, and the University provided the support. Great progress has been made in providing a safe, innovative and nurturing environment where everyone is treated with dignity and respect and students are engaged in meaningful learning experiences. The focus of the partnership for the 2011-2012 school year is continuing to focus on engaging the learner but also taking it to the

next level of improving teacher quality and effectiveness.

Barnegat High School in partnership with Monmouth University is well on the way to fulfilling Tim Westerberg’s *Six Strategies and One Attitude* (2009) for becoming a great high school. They have a common vision with clear instructional goals. They track student progress through ongoing assessment. They provide timely support for struggling students. Finally, they have an attitude where student and teacher success is expected and celebrated.

*Harvey Allen is an assistant professor at Monmouth University; he can be reached at hallen@monmouth.edu. Joe Saxton is the Principal at Barnegat High School; he can be reached at jsaxton@btsk12.com.*

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## PDS Partners Call for Submissions

*PDS Partners is published three times per year (in January, May, and September) by the National Association for Professional Development Schools (NAPDS). Past issues can be viewed at [http://www.napds.org/pds\\_partners.html](http://www.napds.org/pds_partners.html). Magazine article submissions are welcomed from all school, university, and community constituents of Professional Development Schools (PDSs) from the United States and beyond. Articles are typically narrative in style, co-authored by school- and university-based teams, and address any aspect of PDS efforts. Articles are between 300-1000 words. All articles are reviewed by the editor and assistant editor, as well as by the appropriate section editor team. Current sections of the magazine include “Interns and the Internship,” “PDS Partners and Partnerships,” “PDS Researchers and Research,” “PDS Inquiries and Ideas,” “Professional Development and PDS,” “PDS and Alternative Schools/Community Settings.” Authors are asked to identify at least one of the NAPDS “Nine Essentials” addressed by the information on which they are reporting. Article authors do not have to be NAPDS members, but members and school-/university-based teams of PDS constituents receive priority when publication decisions are made. Most articles are invited (the magazine is classified as an “editorial-reviewed” rather than “peer-reviewed” publication), and all article submissions are acknowledged via email by the editors. Authors receive letters of acknowledgement and complimentary copies of the magazine in which their articles appear. Submission of an article indicates that the authors have not submitted substantially similar reports to any other journal or publication. Exact publication dates of accepted articles cannot be guaranteed. Submissions must be prepared using Word and adhere to APA 6th Edition format. Text should be double spaced, 12-point Times New Roman font with any tables, figures, or visual images placed after the reference section. Submission must include a Cover page (Title of article, date of submission, authors name(s) and position or rank with complete mailing address, and email address). Articles are only accepted electronically and should be submitted to the magazine’s editor, Ron Siers, Jr. at Salisbury University, at [rrsiers@salisbury.edu](mailto:rrsiers@salisbury.edu).*

# Supporting Undergraduate Research in Special Education Placements for Pre-service Teachers

*Kymerly Drawdy, Georgia Southern University  
Jemelleh Coes, Langston Chapel Middle School*

*“By acting as a resource to the PDS and the teachers who act as clinical supervisors, pre-service teachers can be viewed as being important parts of a school culture rather than an additional work responsibility for those who have agreed to supervise them at the school level.”*

One of the important features of a teacher preparation program is encouraging active participation of pre-service teachers in the school community. It is crucial that pre-service teachers understand how they can be a vital part of the school community and not simply a “student” teacher who remains on the fringes of the school environment. By acting as a resource to the PDS and the teachers who act as clinical supervisors, pre-service teachers can be viewed as being important parts of a school culture, rather than an additional work responsibility for those who have agreed to supervise them at the school level. By training pre-service teachers to act as a resource for their clinical supervisors, the pre-service teachers are included in the school community and can be viewed as an asset to the overall goal of the school, student success. This model addresses Essential #2 of the NAPDS’s Nine Essentials of a PDS: A school–university culture committed to the preparation of future educators that embraces their active engagement in the school community.

In the PDS described in this model, the middle school and elementary school in the consortium (along with other PDSs) provide field placements for pre-service special education teachers who are enrolled in a cohort. These placements begin in the students’ junior year, first semester and the pre-service teachers provide Tier 2 & 3 interventions for academic and behavioral deficits for students in resource and general education settings. As the pre-service teachers increase both their responsibilities and their time spent in the PDS over the course of their preparation program, they are able to build long-term goals with the students

and the clinical supervisors that are vital to the monitoring of the students’ progress. In addition to the instruction in special education methods for content strategies, the pre-service teachers also receive extensive training in data collection for functional behavior assessments and learning outcomes. This training in data collection is introduced in the beginning of their program in an assessment course and continues throughout each semester, with specific research methods taught in specific coursework.

In the second semester of their junior year, the pre-service teachers are placed exclusively at the consortium middle school for RTI interventions with 6th–8th grade students who are at risk for mathematics and reading. The relationship that exists between the PDS and the university faculty allows for the development of appropriate instruction for the middle school students that is based on research-based practice. The PDS shares current statewide testing outcomes with the university faculty, who then tailor instruction in the methods classes based on the mathematics and reading deficits identified in the testing outcomes. This instruction provides techniques and strategies that can be used in the RTI practices with the middle school students. The pre-service teachers provide small group instruction to both at-risk youth and students with disabilities under the supervision of the clinical supervisor. They may generate new instructional devices as well as assist the middle school students with their strategies which are taught in the general education classroom. The strategies are based on the pre-service teachers’ assessment and understanding of

previous testing data shared with them by the clinical supervisors along with their own instruction in their methods coursework. The pre-service teachers assess and monitor student progress on established goals based on their deficits in reading and mathematics. The clinical and university supervisors provide guidance in operationalizing observed behaviors and modifying instruction based on the middle school students’ progress. The resource that the students provide in data recording has been well-received by the faculty and administration of the PDS, as the weekly monitoring allows the classroom teachers to modify instruction in the general education classroom.

The pre-service teachers are required to share their reflection on the middle school students’ outcomes during their portfolio presentations which occur at the end of the semester. Typically, the pre-service teachers remark that they are viewed as a necessary part of the RTI practice because they are knowledgeable about the students’ progress and that the data has been gathered through scientific methods allows them to offer a resource to their assigned clinical supervisor. This practicum experience seeks to provide the pre-service teachers with an introduction to what it means to be viewed as a necessary component of a learning community.

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# Leveraging a PDS Partnership to Design Rigorous Common Mathematics Assessments

Drew Polly, University of North Carolina Charlotte

Torriann Dooley and Kharma Banks, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools

## Introduction

### Background

One day in our second grade planning meeting, our principal posed the question, “How do we know that a student who receives a 100 in one class would also receive a 100 in another class?” We were silent. Our district was starting to implement Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) and common assessments. Little did we know that the process we were embarking on would change the way that we taught and assessed mathematics. Highlighting NAPDS Essential Standard #8, we would like to share the collaboration between a university faculty member and second grade teachers.

### Professional learning communities

The PLC model we implemented included a process of pre-testing, designing instruction, teaching and learning with ongoing assessment, and post-testing students. PLCs provided us with opportunities to discuss our teaching and students’ performance and collaboratively make data-based decisions. During these meetings, administrators, a mathematics coach, teachers, and university faculty created assessments, examined data, and devised instructional plans. We found that the process of designing common assessments to be the most challenging.

### The Process of Creating Common Assessments

Here are the four steps that we went through to create common assessments.

### Analyzing the state mathematics standards

First, we needed to ensure that we paid special attention to state standards that are building blocks and critical topics. Through our PDS partnership, university faculty had helped teachers to analyze both

the state mathematics standards and our school districts’ pacing guide. As we worked, we came across some standards that were unclear that required us to further examine supporting documents from the State Department of Education to make sure that we were accurately interpreting the standards.

### Examining the mathematics curriculum

We started this process during our first year, implementing Investigations in Number, Data, and Space, a mathematics curriculum focused on problem solving and higher-level thinking. However, the curriculum did not align completely to our state standards, so our work of creating assessments required us to determine the primary state mathematics standards and look for opportunities to either select or create assessment items that were either embedded or similar to those tasks in our curriculum.

### Addressing higher-order thinking skills

Our state’s Department of Education had just adopted the Revised Bloom’s Taxonomy ([RBT], Anderson & Krawthwohl 2000) as the framework for assessment. RBT’s higher-levels of thinking include analyzing and evaluating knowledge, as well as creating new representations of knowledge. While Investigations provided these types of tasks, we found the need to create additional items to address critical state standards at an analysis or higher level when there were not many of them in the Investigations assessments.

### Designing rubrics and grading norms

After assessments were created, we collaboratively designed rubrics for each item. Grade level meetings were used to discuss whether to

use a two-point rubric (full credit or no credit) or a three-point rubric, which designated whether students met, partially met or did not meet their benchmarks. As we used more and more tasks that addressed higher-order thinking, we found more need for three-point rubrics. Likewise, we had frequent conversations about what types of student responses would fit into each of the three categories, requiring us to predict how students would solve tasks. The process of creating rubrics and grading norms was the most challenging. Teachers’ individual philosophies about the value of partial credit and their expectations of rigor, or lack thereof, were communicated through the discussion. In hindsight, this experience was the most beneficial, as we learned a great deal about the mathematics embedded in the curriculum and the expectations for students in the state standards.

### Suggestions for Designing Common Assessments

From our experiences of creating common experiences, we have learned a few key lessons that we would like to share. These are detailed below.

### Did we really address higher-order thinking skills?

We have found that our most rigorous assessment items included a few characteristics. First, they were open-ended, with numerous possible ways to get the answer and multiple correct solutions. These assessments also included multiple representations; students showed their answer using a combination of numbers, pictures or written explanations. By requiring students to show their work in two ways, we were able to gain a deeper sense of students’ mathematical understandings. Lastly, these items included students creating solutions to fit

*“Building on PDS Essential Standard 8, the collaboration between university faculty and teachers allowed teachers to deepen their knowledge of mathematics and assessment (Standard 3).”*

specific context. In the earlier example, students had to share how they would make the number 20. In another assessment on addition and subtraction, students had to solve multi-step word problems using multiple approaches and write an explanation of how they solved the task.

#### **Making time to discuss data**

Teachers used to come to grade level meetings with student work samples or data, and rather than taking time to analyze student work samples or discuss frequently observed misconceptions, we discussed other content areas, administrative details, or other topics related to our grade level. We overcame this barrier by setting time aside after we gave assessments to discuss our results. Teachers were held accountable for coming to meetings with the graded assessments and a preliminary analysis of which items were most problematic for students. Teachers also were expected to bring ideas for intervention strategies to share for the “students who have not learned” it. By setting time aside to do nothing else but analyze assessment data and student work, we engaged in conversations about

our students and collaboratively brainstormed ways to address our students’ misconceptions. The discussion of student data was not an immediate part of the PLC. During a majority of the first year, we analyzed the state standards and created assessments and rubrics. In the second year, assessments were revised, but most of the time was dedicated to looking at student work.

#### **Revising the assessment**

Even though we had collaboratively created the assessment and discussed the items in detail before giving it, there have been assessments that needed to be revised for the next year. In order to accurately detect growth, we did not alter assessments between the pre- and post-test, but we made notes for future years about changes that were needed for both assessment items and the rubric. As teachers begin this process, it is easy to get frustrated and be overly analytical about each item. This time between brainstorming and finalizing the assessment gave teachers the opportunity to process and further think about their students, the mathematics and the assessment items.

#### **Concluding Thoughts**

Building on PDS Essential 8, the collaboration between university faculty and teachers allowed teachers to deepen their knowledge of mathematics and assessment. This work made us more aware of students’ mathematical understandings, the expectations of our state standards, and the mathematics embedded in our standards-based curriculum. More importantly, students have benefited by participating in more activities that develop their higher-order thinking skills and provide opportunities for them to demonstrate their understanding of mathematics.

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## “Editors’ Corner”

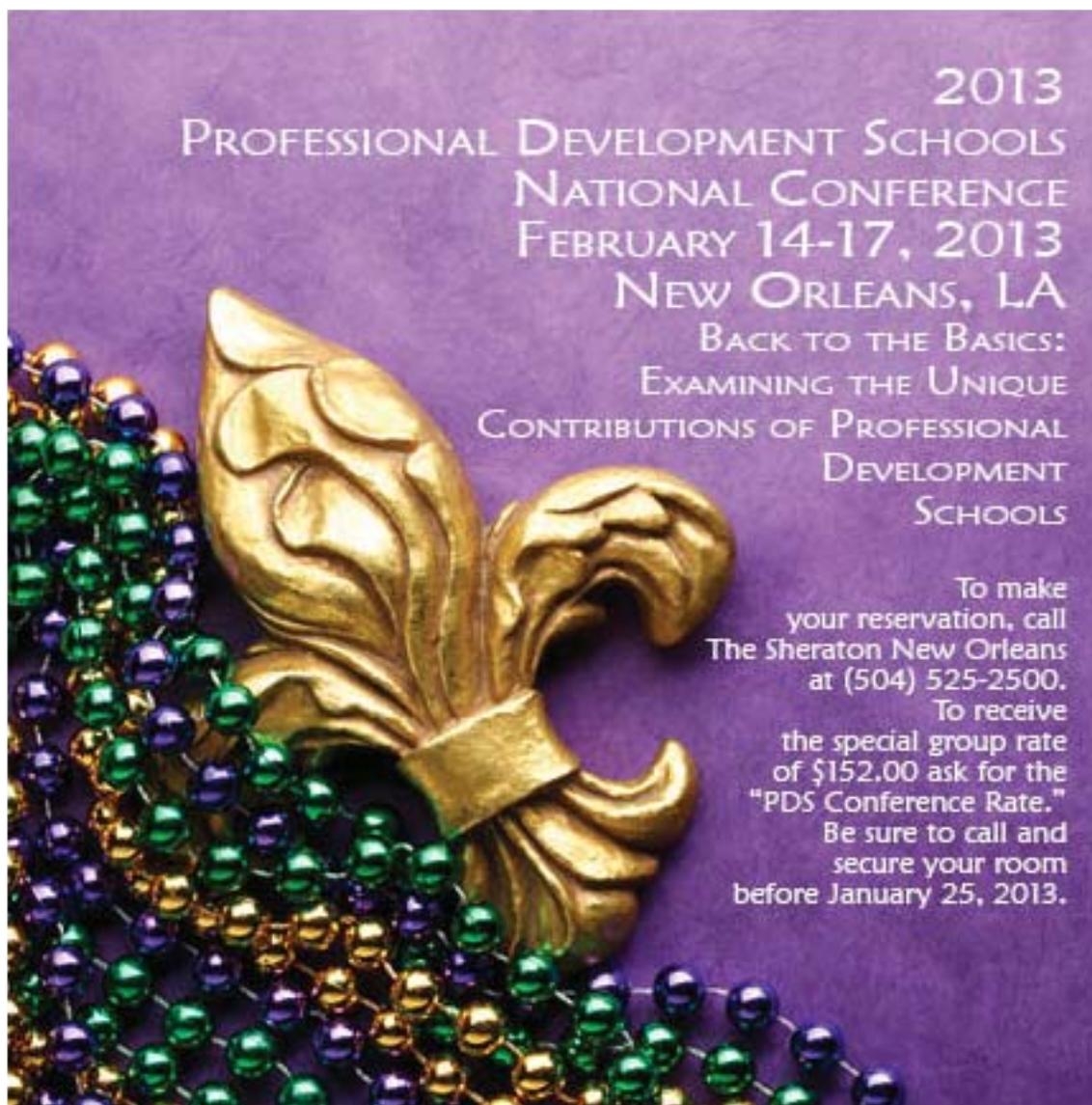
*Ron Siers, Jr., Salisbury University*

*Cathy Ramey, Mardela Middle and High School*

*Our editorial team is excited to bring you the January 2013 edition of PDS Partners. Articles submitted and reviewed for this edition come from Texas, California, North Carolina, South Carolina, Florida, New Jersey, & Georgia. The January edition typically means that we are nearly half way through the academic year. Where does the time go? Many PDS partnerships are preparing for a new cohort of student interns. As we begin the second half of the school year, we hope that all PDS stakeholders continue along their life-long learning journey. We each are afforded the opportunity to provide a myriad of chances to make a difference within our PDS networks.*

*The upcoming PDS National Conference in New Orleans, Louisiana, provides countless opportunities to network with PDS members and calcify the collegial relationships and inter-institutional culture that is unique to the NAPDS. We are excited to meet potential PDS Partners’ authors at the conference. We welcome your thoughts, comments, concerns, and ideas for our magazine and look forward to learning with you at the PDS National Conference.*

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