Leading and Learning: “Better Practices” for Teaching Language Arts in a Professional Development School

Sybil Keesbury, Vicki Luther, Mercer University

Just as learning is at the heart of all formal educational settings, the importance of providing opportunities for such learning through scholarly practice, discussion, and reflection is essential for success within Professional Development Schools. While some may believe that pre-service teachers are the ones to benefit extensively from a PDS model, in reality, the goal is to support and enhance the learning of both prospective and experienced educators (Darling-Hammond, Bullmaster, & Cobb, 1995). The Holistic Child program of Mercer University, an early childhood special education teaching degree in Pre-K through fifth grades, maintains a collegial partnership with Ingram Pye Elementary, which is currently in its six consecutive year as a Professional Development School.

Although this partnership has been ongoing for years, there has been a lack of consistency in administration during this time; until recently, no school principal had ever remained in their administrative position for longer than two years. In addition, there has been an absence of continuity within the teaching staff; these continuous changes in personnel brought considerable challenges for all. As the guiding force within a professional development school is to ensure learning and growth for every stakeholder, the need for professional development of both the pre-service and classroom teachers in this elementary school has proven to be essential. As university faculty, we want to ensure that the teacher candidates are learning from, and with, their cooperating mentors. By giving a needs assessment, we were able to determine how best to help support the educators within the school.

While professional development is imperative in all school settings, it is perhaps especially so in underperforming schools that may have difficulty attracting and retaining educators (Calkins, Guenther, Belfiore, & Lash, 2007). Professional development is also exceptionally pivotal in the teaching of English language arts, as the concepts associated with reading, writing, listening, and speaking are critical in students’ understanding of all discipline areas, including social studies, science, and mathematics. Ingram Pye Elementary is a low socioeconomic urban Title I school. Rasinski (2017) states that research repeatedly shows poverty as “one of the most powerful correlates to reading difficulty” (p. 519); therefore, the importance of enhancing English language arts practices is essential. Rasinski goes on to say that children living in poverty are
President’s Perspective

Wendy Baker, Hillsborough County Public Schools

Greetings, fellow members of the National Association for Professional Development Schools! I am excited to meet all of you as I begin this next step in my role as president. I’d like first to take this opportunity to acknowledge Dr. Doug Rogers and thank him for the time he served as the previous president of the association. He will continue with the association in the role of past-president, where his knowledge of the association will be welcomed in a new capacity.

I have been an educator for over two decades. I started my career originally as an elementary teacher. My love for learning and teaching has grown over the years to levels that in the beginning of my career, I could never have anticipated. It was during the time I worked as an elementary school teacher that I learned the importance of inquiry, which has been the driving force behind my personal growth. It is this passion of educational growth that piqued curiosity and prompted me to seek new opportunities for growth. So, after 18 years in the classroom, I ventured into a new path and become a Partnership Resource Teacher (PRT). Entering the role of a PRT, after close to two decades of elementary teaching, introduced me to a new and complex facet of teaching-the art of teaching others. I find partnership work both complex and rewarding, and it is within the complexity of our partnerships that we learn how to continually renew and innovate our programs for all stakeholders. It is the element of personal reflection and group collaboration that propels our partnerships forward and drives us to new heights. It has been through my membership, interactions, and presentations at NAPDS that I have been inspired by the dedicated people and their desire to live the work every day.

I encourage you to reach out to others in your partnerships who may not be involved in our organization and share with them the many opportunities NAPDS has for all stakeholders involved in partnership work. The work we all do is a testament to our dedication as educators to want to continually renew and expand education. Let’s continue to grow and learn from one another. I look forward to seeing everyone in February at our next conference.

Wendy Baker is a Partnership Resource Teacher with Hillsborough County Public Schools and the University of South Florida. She can be reached at webaker@mail.usf.edu.
Editor’s Corner
Eva Garin, Bowie State University
Drew Polly, University of North Carolina at Charlotte

Welcome to the Fall 2018 issue of The National Association for Professional Development Schools journal, PDS Partners: Bridging Research to Practice. We are happy to announce that we are now a peer-reviewed journal that illustrates the practitioners’ voice in PDS work and aims to connect research-based ideas in applicable and relevant ways for our readers. Our assistant editor Dawn Nowlin, a 5th grade teacher at Whitehall Elementary School in Bowie, Maryland is a graduate of the PDS program at Bowie State University and now serves as a mentor teacher for her alma mater and she coordinates the mentor teacher workshops for her PDS Partnership. In this issue, she has a column reaching out to first time authors to offer support with ideas and feedback about possible future articles. We hope that with the addition of this support, we will receive more submissions from PDS teachers and teacher candidates whom we know have a great deal to say about their PDS work.

In this issue we also continue the conversation about the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education’s recent report by the Clinical Practice Commission, A Pivot Toward Clinical Practice, Its Lexicon, and the Renewal of Educator Preparation with an article by Cindy Stunkard from Kutztown University of Pennsylvania. Stunkard describes the process of developing and expanding PDS work for their teacher candidates. We hope to keep this conversation going and welcome submissions that link the Commission’s work to PDS.

Other articles in this journal’s edition address such relevant topics as the role of PDS in recruiting and retaining teachers authored by Seth Parsons, Audra Parker and Kristien Zenkov from George Mason University as well as their school partners from area districts. A series of articles address professional development opportunities for university faculty, PDS faculty and teacher candidates including reflective discussion throughout the school day (Sybil Keesbury and Sybil Luther, Mercer University), using learning walks (Laura Alpaugh, Loyola University Maryland; Scott Kolarides, Overlea High School).

There are also articles about problem solving and planning in PDS partnerships that addresses intern challenges (Jamie Silverman and John Foley, Towson University), the role of summer strategic planning (Eva Garin, Bowie State; Dawn Nowlin, Dawn Wine, Whitehall Elementary; and Steve Mellen, Dwight D. Eisenhower Middle School). Also included is an article about how Stetson University aligned the university strategic planning (Eva Garin, Bowie State; Dawn Wine, Whitehall Elementary; and Steve Mellen, Dwight D. Eisenhower Middle School) and planning in PDS partnerships that addresses intern challenges (Jamie Silverman and John Foley, Towson University). There are also articles about problem solving and planning in PDS partnerships that addresses intern challenges (Jamie Silverman and John Foley, Towson University), the role of summer strategic planning (Eva Garin, Bowie State; Dawn Nowlin, Dawn Wine, Whitehall Elementary; and Steve Mellen, Dwight D. Eisenhower Middle School). Also included is an article about how Stetson University aligned the university strategic planning (Eva Garin, Bowie State; Dawn Wine, Whitehall Elementary; and Steve Mellen, Dwight D. Eisenhower Middle School) and planning in PDS partnerships that addresses intern challenges (Jamie Silverman and John Foley, Towson University).

Stories from the Field (blog) Co-editors: Geraldine Hill, Elizabeth City State University and Jacquelyn Mesco, Dalton State College

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much more likely to struggle in reading and are much less likely to have access to materials that would help with reading improvement (2017). Due to such factors, there is a critical need for the teachers of Ingram Pye Elementary to gain skills on the implementation of current research-based strategies regarding reading instruction, especially in the context of phonemic awareness and phonics, which are foundational skills necessary for reading success (Rasinski, 2017).

Driven by the belief that new, explicit instructional methods can lead to a better understanding of the unique needs of the students, and determined to support gains in the reading processes of the students of Ingram Pye, we, the university liaison and university faculty member, in conjunction with the elementary school principal and academic coach, decided that we would pilot a new approach. We wanted to engage the classroom teachers in our class sessions, as we believed that it would best benefit all involved. A required three-hour reading course for the teacher candidates was taught at the elementary school at certain times throughout the semester. These class sessions were held once a month during the fall semester. Because the pre-service teachers are engaged in a year-long clinical placement during their senior year, we strategically placed the pre-service teachers in groups with their teacher mentors and with teachers from their respective grade levels. This allowed teachers and practitioners to hear the information and practice the strategies together before implementing them with students in the classroom. Social learning is powerful and can have tremendous benefits (Vygotsky, 1978), and giving novice and veteran educators time to work together and make plans for future classroom lessons allowed for deeper discussion and engagement. Lines of communication were opened, and great conversations emerged from the topics discussed. This also led to teachers feeling more comfortable co-teaching with their respective teacher candidates.

Arrangements were made so that the professional development sessions were staggered during the school day. This meant that teachers in various grades did not all attend at once. Because of the three-hour class timeframe, we were able to have two 1½ hour sessions per day. Due to this framework, we were able to change our instruction to best fit the needs of the various grade levels; what we discussed during our time with first and second grade teachers, for example, was a bit different than what we discussed with the fourth and fifth grade teachers. However, while the instructional techniques varied, we discussed appropriate reading instruction and gave conceptual strategies that could be used in a variety of grade levels and for a wide array of students’ ability levels and needs.

During the initial meeting with the school principal to discuss professional development needs, we learned that many of the teachers were lacking in an understanding of phonics and phonemic awareness. Therefore, it was beneficial to examine the foundational components of language arts, as some of the educators had limited teaching experience in the primary grades and were unaware of the central concepts associated with emergent reading. Helping teachers understand the essentials of early literacy allowed them to recognize potential reasons that students in those older grades may struggle in reading and language arts components. We discussed how the fundamentals of reading, such as phonics, vocabulary, and comprehension, all work together in order to create proficient, lifelong readers. We looked at data to see language arts deficiencies, and spent time discussing concepts such as word attack skills, formative assessments, engaging vocabulary activities, and close reading techniques. These monthly class sessions were designed to build upon one another; in groups, we discussed what research-based strategies had been integrated in respective classrooms and ways to differentiate strategies to meet the needs of all learners. Teachers were learning from colleagues and both novice and veteran teachers were learning from one another.

The professional development sessions were developed with both the teacher and candidate in mind. Prior to the beginning of the school year, we created a flexible schedule; while we knew the concepts we wished to discuss each month, we also made sure that we were meeting the needs of the teachers, the candidates, and the students with whom they were working. We reflected after each session and discussed what was working well and what adjustments could be made.

As educators, we may never truly know the impact we may make on others. Because this was a pilot approach, we were learning through doing. However, we firmly believe that these professional development sessions had positive outcomes. We asked the participants to give feedback on what they learned after each session, and we asked them to discuss the strategies and tools that were being utilized. Many of the classroom teachers, from various grade levels and with varying years of teaching experience, shared with us that they had implemented at least one strategy learned from the professional development sessions into their lessons and classroom activities. Those teachers also said that the new information, suggestions, and ideas given in the sessions made a positive impact for their students and in their teaching practices. The teachers also discussed how strategies can be utilized in a variety of ways within different grade levels and class settings, thus scaffolding and differentiating instruction for a variety of learners.

A fifth grade teacher, who has been teaching for almost 20 years, said that through our discussions in a particular session, she learned how to make vocabulary more interesting for her students; she explained that she and the teacher candidate immediately began utilizing a particular strategy and had seen gains in vocabulary assessments. Having “lessons in common” with the teacher mentors allowed the pre-service teachers to feel more confident in their instructional practices and more comfortable in their year-long placements.

Through this approach, the practitioners developed a strong understanding that professional learning is a quintessential part of teaching, and that learning and teaching go hand-in-hand. The teacher candidates also recognized that collaboration is key for educators. As Bates and Morgan (2018) state, “Collaboration supports a togetherness mind-set and develops collective knowledge that extends beyond individual, isolated experiences in classrooms” (p. 624). Bates and Morgan also believe that trusting relationships are essential in educational settings (2018). The times spent together built trust and allowed the candidates to feel imbedded in the school environment.

As university personnel, we believe we are creating teacher leaders at Ingram Pye by conducting common professional development times to improve reading instruction of the students, and we strongly believe that these teachers will soon begin leading their own professional development sessions. Although class sessions had previously been taught in the elementary classroom, this new approach allowed us to bring the teachers into class sessions with the pre-service candidates while matching instructional goals for all involved. Although it took structure and planning to allow teachers to be relieved from their classrooms at various times throughout the semester, we feel that these preparation efforts were well worth it, as teachers and candidates were able to collaborate and plan together.

Giving time for teachers and pre-service teachers to learn, share, and practice with one another builds the capacity for leadership within both groups. We chose not to think in terms of “best practices”; instead, we focused on “better practices” that can help teachers and pre-service teachers learn and lead cooperatively. Because this was a pilot approach, we were unsure of the outcomes, but are confident that this was successful. We plan to utilize this structure again, but in the future, we want to continue this approach into the spring semester. In addition, we want to continually look for the needs of the teachers and teacher candidates and would like the teachers and teacher candidates to plan an even bigger role in the structure of the sessions. Our goal is to make this a permanent means of professional learning at Ingram Pye, and also for other schools within the district. There is great work to be done, and this approach shows that we can do it much better when we do it together.

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Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child (WSCC) Model

Many schools have incorporated health programs into the curriculum, but widespread implementation has been limited and most health programs operate independently of academic goals (Basch, 2011). Recently, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), ASCD, and key leaders from other health and education sectors collaborated to develop the WSCC model based on a coordinated school health approach and the whole child framework (ASCD, 2016b). The WSCC model (see Figure 1) unites the previously separated goals of improving health and well-being and increasing

Figure 1: Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child (WSCC) Model
During the 2015-2016 academic year, the final year of Kemper funding, the number of students enrolled at Bradley PDS sites who met or exceeded state standards on the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) assessment ranged from 3% to 23% in English/language arts and from 0% to 14% in mathematics (Illinois State Board of Education, 2017). Moreover, only 7% of high school juniors and seniors at Bradley PDS sites met or exceeded benchmarks as measured by the ACT college readiness assessment. Students' low test performance was likely exacerbated by the fact that on any given day, 6% to 17% of students at Bradley PDS sites were not in attendance at school, and 9% to 24% moved to a different school at least once during the academic year (Illinois State Board of Education, 2017).

Goals of the Partnership
At the university level, PDS partnerships have traditionally involved teacher preparation programs (Holmes Group, 1990; Holmes Group, 1986); but Bradley's PDS work was distinctive in its involvement of both the education and the health professions. University site coordinators, faculty, and students from all five academic departments worked closely with PDS principals, liaisons, and teachers, to support and develop the needs of the whole child through projects and initiatives that addressed each of the ten components of the WSCC model. Two goals of the Bradley PDS Partnership directly supported these efforts: “Support and improve student learning and achievement” and “support the health and well-being of students, their families, and the professionals who work with them” (Bradley University, 2018c, para. 1).

Health-Focused PDS Projects and Initiatives
The Bradley PDS Partnership implemented numerous health-focused PDS projects each year, each one aligning with one or more components of the WSCC model. Examples of some of Bradley's more recent health-focused PDS projects and initiatives are described here (see Table 1).

Short-term Projects and One-time Events
Some PDS initiatives were short-term projects or one-time events. For instance, to improve the physical environment at one PDS site, school volunteers and a university service group

Bradley PDS Partnership
Bradley University
Bradley University, located in Peoria, Illinois, offers more than 185 undergraduate programs and 30 graduate programs across five colleges (Bradley University, 2018a). Bradley's College of Education and Health Sciences houses five departments: Family and Consumer Sciences; Leadership in Education, Nonprofits, and Counseling; Nursing; Physical Therapy and Health Science; and Teacher Education. The Bradley Professional Development Schools (PDS) Partnership, coordinated by faculty in the College, was established in 1995 to create an extended learning environment that addresses and responds to the changing needs of PK-20 learners (i.e., pre-kindergarten through graduate school). Funded by the William T. Kemper Foundation-Commerce Bank, Trustee from 1995 to 2016, the partnership served eight elementary, middle, and/or high schools near Bradley University at the time of this writing (Bradley University, 2018b).

Bradley PDS Sites
All eight of Bradley's PDS sites served high-need student populations, defined in part by the 2001 No Child Left Behind Act as schools “where at least 30% of students come from families with incomes below the poverty line” (Teach.com, 2017, para. 1). According to the 2015-2016 Illinois Report Card (Illinois State Board of Education, 2017), the number of low-income students at Bradley PDS sites ranged from approximately 84% to 93.5%. Many students enrolled at Bradley PDS sites were academically at-risk, defined by one of our partner school districts as students who are eligible for free or reduced lunch according to federal guidelines and perform academically two or more grade levels below their peers.

Table 1: Example Projects addressing WSCC Components

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WSCC Component</th>
<th>Example Projects</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Health Education</td>
<td>Teddy Bear Clinic</td>
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<td></td>
<td>YMCA Healthy Kids Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>Physical Education and Physical Activity</td>
<td>Combined literacy and physical activity lessons</td>
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<td></td>
<td>CATCH lessons</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nutrition Environment and Services</td>
<td>Menu review by faculty dietitian</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nutrition assessment and counseling</td>
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<tr>
<td>Health Services</td>
<td>Blood pressure screenings and flu shots on Grandparents Day</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nursing student internships</td>
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<tr>
<td>Counseling, Psychological, and Social Services</td>
<td>Academic Progress Conferences</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social and Emotional Climate</td>
<td>STRETCH anti-bullying presentations</td>
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<td>Physical Environment</td>
<td>Refurbished school courtyard</td>
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<tr>
<td>Employee Wellness</td>
<td>In-service for pre-service and practicing teachers on compassion fatigue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Engagement</td>
<td>Blood pressure screenings and flu shots for family members on Grandparents Day</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>YMCA Healthy Kids Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community Involvement</td>
<td>YMCA collaborations providing CATCH and other health-related activities</td>
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<td></td>
<td>AVID-related activities such as tutoring, teacher education clinical experiences, college campus visits</td>
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<td></td>
<td>School-based health clinics</td>
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The ten components of the WSCC model are health education; health services; nutrition environment and services; physical education and physical activity; social and emotional school climate; physical environment; counseling, psychological, and social services; employee wellness; family engagement; and community involvement. For many schools, putting the WSCC model into action remains a challenge, often due to limited resources, but PDS partnerships can help schools take action by sharing responsibility for holistic support of students’ health and learning needs (Lewallen, Hunt, Potts-Datema, Zaza, & Giles, 2015). Such health-focused partnerships can provide the financial and human resources needed to meet students’ learning and health goals (Rasberry, Slade, Lohrmann, & Valois, 2015). The Bradley PDS Partnership offers one multi-faceted example.

Example Projects addressing WSCC Components

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refurbished the school’s courtyard area (WSCC Component: Physical Environment). In another project, an interactive discussion led by graduate-level counseling interns was provided for pre-service and practicing teachers to increase their awareness of compassion fatigue in an effort to improve employee wellness (WSCC Component: Employee Wellness). In a third short-term project, nursing faculty and students provided blood pressure screenings and flu shots during a school-wide Grandparents Day event to raise family members’ health awareness and to promote proactive health care habits (WSCC Component: Health Services; Family Engagement).

Long-term Projects
Other PDS initiatives were longer-term, lasting several weeks or months. For example, pre-service teachers enrolled in an advanced language arts instructional methods course participated in a semester-long partnership with a sixth grade class. Five times during the semester, the pre-service teachers visited the sixth graders to conduct a mini-unit focused on reading comprehension, vocabulary development, and expository writing. While literacy was a focus of the project, using a text about exercise and incorporating physical activity further met the needs of the students and school.

Prior to the first classroom visit, the pre-service teachers exchanged friendly letters with the sixth graders to learn about their students’ interests and to informally assess students’ written literacy skills. During the first two visits, pre-service teachers introduced one or two reading comprehension strategies, modeled the strategy(ies), and encouraged their students to use the strategy(ies) while reading a text together. During the third classroom visit, the pre-service teachers introduced a vocabulary strategy, modeled the strategy, and then worked with their students to apply the strategy to three vocabulary words from the text. During the fourth and fifth classroom visits, pre-service teachers engaged their students in organizing and writing an expository essay, which the pre-service teachers subsequently word processed and “published” on decorative paper after providing feedback to their students regarding their writing strengths and areas for improvement.

While the literacy aspect of the project was mutually authentic and enriching on its own, this classroom partnership addressed both academics and health and wellness. Immediately following each day’s instruction, the pre-service teachers led a rotation of physical education (P.E.) fitness stations that engaged the sixth graders in simple exercises to develop flexibility, aerobic capacity, strength, and balance. Five pre-service teachers led each station, and groups of sixth grade students rotated to a new station every five minutes. To encourage student participation, the pre-service teachers took part in many of the exercises, which made the stations more fun for everyone. The P.E. fitness stations significantly enriched the classroom partnership by authentically extending the content of the literacy lessons through modeling and practice of simple exercises that students could do anywhere, anytime, without special equipment or advanced skills (WSCC Component: Physical Education and Physical Activity).

Ongoing Projects
Still other projects became recurring by semester or academic year due to ongoing need.

Teddy Bear Clinic. At one Bradley PDS site, kindergarten and first grade students were given a teddy bear, doll, or stuffed animal to take to a local “teddy bear clinic,” which was held in the school’s gymnasium. Each student had an opportunity to take their teddy bear to the “on duty” student nurses for a wellness exam. The nursing students took temperatures, listened to lung sounds using a stethoscope, gave immunizations, and applied bandages; explaining each action as they demonstrated. The purpose of the teddy bear clinic was to alleviate young children’s fears associated with visiting a health care professional and being examined as well as to demonstrate how nurses care for people (WSCC Component: Health Education). Each participating student was allowed to keep his or her teddy bear, doll, or stuffed animal following the experience.

PDS PARTNERSHIPS ARE UNIQUELY POSITIONED TO SUPPORT STUDENT ACADEMICS, HEALTH, AND WELL-BEING

Academic Progress Conferences. At another Bradley PDS site, members of the community, including Bradley faculty, staff, and students, met one-on-one with seventh through twelfth grade students four times each academic year to discuss middle and high school students’ mid-term progress reports and college/career plans (WSCC Component: Counseling, Psychological, and Social Services). The community mentors offered encouragement and assisted students with problem solving related to their classes, schedules, and study habits. These one-on-one conferences demonstrated the support and value communities place on student success.

YMCA collaborations. Other community organizations also provided support and services to schools, allowing the PDS partnership additional opportunities for involvement. Over several semesters, Bradley students were trained by the Greater Peoria YMCA to implement the CATCH (Coordinated Approach to Child Health) curriculum for after-school programs at local schools. As part of their capstone health education course, Bradley students have also planned, implemented, and evaluated the annual YMCA Healthy Kids Day event, which featured “wellness stations” around topics such as hand hygiene, exotic fruit tasting, camping safety, and physical activity using the CATCH curriculum. Each year the event engaged families in learning and wellness-related experiences while also providing a sense of community (WSCC Component: Health Education; Physical Education and Physical Activity; Family Engagement; Community Involvement).

Head Start menu review. The Bradley PDS Partnership also provided indirect health-related services to schools. For example, a professor and registered dietitian provided monthly breakfast, lunch, and snack menu reviews for one Bradley PDS site’s Head Start program. This in-kind donation allowed the program to meet grant requirements for their nutrition services while conserving funds (WSCC Component: Nutrition Environment and Services).

Institutionalized Projects
Because the Bradley PDS Partnership was in place for over two decades, some projects became institutionalized into Bradley’s school-university culture, helping to stabilize institutional support and strengthen project integrity (Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2017).
now established practices at Bradley (WSCC Component: Community Involvement).

First grade literacy classroom partnership. A student tutoring partnership between an advanced literacy methods course and first grade classes established at one Bradley PDS site in 2010 to provide instructional reading support for first graders and practice teaching experiences for pre-service teachers was so mutually beneficial over several semesters’ time that the official Bradley course description was modified in 2014 to make the student tutoring experience a required assignment for all sections of the course (WSCC Component: Community Involvement).

STRETCH. In 2014, an anti-bullying effort called STRETCH (Students Ready to Make Change) was founded by two Bradley teacher education professors to provide inspirational presentations for PK-12 students (i.e., pre-kindergarten through high school) focused on combatting bullying and promoting kindness (WSCC Component: Social and Emotional Climate). Comprised of 15 to 25 Bradley students each semester, the STRETCH program rapidly expanded in the number of presentations delivered each semester, as well as the geographical range of the presentations. By the 2015-2016 academic year, STRETCH was delivering 20 presentations throughout the tri-county area each semester. Moreover, four students and one Bradley professor also delivered presentations in New York and California. Due to its huge success, STRETCH became an official Bradley student organization in spring 2016 and continues to provide presentations at numerous schools beyond those in the Bradley PDS Partnership.

Clinical experiences. At two Bradley PDS sites with school-based health clinics (SBHCs), graduate dietetic interns provided nutrition assessment and counseling to PK-12 students as part of their supervised practice rotations. Dietetic interns met with nutritionally at-risk students to discuss healthy eating options and physical activity strategies, empowering students to increase fruit and vegetable consumption, escalate activity, and decrease screen time (WSCC Component: Nutrition Environment and Services; Community Involvement).

At a different Bradley PDS site, nursing students provided health care services through junior- and senior-level nursing internships. These 10-week, 75 hour clinical rotations allowed Bradley nursing students to educate both PK-8 students (i.e., pre-kindergarten through eighth grade) and school staff members on a variety of wellness topics, such as vaccinations and symptoms of contagious childhood diseases as well as to provide minor health care services for illnesses and injuries (WSCC Component: Health Services).

Campus visits. Several Bradley PDS sites utilized the AVID college preparation program to activate students’ thinking about college and career options. To support students’ academic exploration, field trips to the university campus provided many students with a first-time visit to a college campus, connected them to the broader community, and got them excited about preparing for their futures. During one campus visit, fourth through eighth grade students attended interactive presentations about careers in nursing, education, physical therapy, and family and consumer sciences and toured the grounds, a sorority house, a dorm room, the student center, and the library before eating lunch in one of Bradley’s residence halls (WSCC Component: Community Involvement). Following the campus visit, one student visitor reflected, “I could imagine what it would be like to go to college; I felt like an actual college student for the day.”

For over two decades, the Bradley PDS Partnership relied heavily on volunteers from the College of Education and Health Sciences, the larger Bradley community, and Bradley PDS sites to generate and sustain momentum toward the goals and actions of its strategic plan. During the 2015-2016 academic year alone, records indicate that 109 Bradley faculty/professional staff, 202 PDS teachers and administrators, and 630 Bradley undergraduate and graduate students volunteered their time through active participation in at least one Bradley PDS project or initiative. A resource coordinator for one of the schools said the PDS Partnership allowed her “the opportunity to personally consult with multiple professionals across [a] range of disciplines,” and the involvement was invaluable to school programming and “unattainable by other means” (Rumba, 2012, p. 9).

Concluding Remarks PDS partnerships are uniquely positioned to support student academics, health, and well-being; and the WSCC model provides a useful structure for guiding such a comprehensive approach to student development. Successful health-focused partnerships integrate the ten WSCC components into school goals and curriculum, design PDS projects and initiatives that emphasize student health and well-being, and collect data and/or maintain records to measure short- and long-term health and wellness outcomes. Health-focused PDS partnerships can begin with one or two WSCC components and easier-to-accomplish initiatives, progressing to more WSCC components and longer-term, higher impact projects over time. By using the WSCC model as a health-focused framework, PDS partnerships can support, challenge, and authentically engage PK-20 students in health and wellness improvement efforts that make a lifelong impact.

References


every student needs. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.


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Summer Strategic Planning

Eva Garin, Bowie State University
Dawn Nowlin and Dawn Wine, Whitehall Elementary School
Steve Mellin, Dwight D. Eisenhower Middle School

Introduction
Before the first bell on the first day of school, before all placements are finalized, before the fall semester gets underway on campus, successful Professional Development School (PDS) networks engage in Summer Strategic Planning (SSP). In this article, we will share our experiences with SSP and highlight its promise as a tool for generating buy-in and continuous improvement for PDS networks. The need for SSP is clearly stated in our state’s Professional Development Schools: An Implementation Manual (2003), a document that guides PDS work in the state of Maryland. Although the structure of SSP differs from partnership to partnership, certain commonalities exist across the state. These include the following activities:

- Establish a truly collaborative atmosphere where each voice at the table has equal weight.
- Establish clearly defined long- and short-term goals and objectives that are written around targeted improvements for PreK-12 students, teacher candidates and PreK-12 faculty.
- Develop timelines that are challenging but realistic.
- Generate expected outcomes for both the long- and short-term goals and objectives.
- Include opportunities for celebration at milestones along the way by building an underlying social structure that contributes to trust building and lasting relationships. (p. 13-14)

SSP is supported by recent calls for teacher preparation reform. In a recent report of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, A Pivot Toward Clinical Practice, Its Lexicon, and the Renewal of Educator Preparation (2018), the context for university and school interactions is said to occur in a “third space”. This third space represents the intersection of practitioner and academic knowledge. Additionally, this third space must nurture equity and inclusivity between the university and partner schools. (p. 25) This AACTE document also includes a Mutual Benefit Proclamation that supports the vital and synergistic roles held by boundary-spanners, school-based teacher educators, and university-based teacher educators (p. 33), all of whom participate in our SSP. Through SSP activities, “clinical practice intentionally connects course work and field work so that teacher candidates can experience, with support, the interplay between the two” (p. 35).

Planning
Bowie State University (BSU) holds SSP at the end of each school year. Participants include BSU faculty and field supervisors, school-based PDS coordinators and principals, school district personnel, and representatives from the Maryland State Department of Education. Prior to SSP, a planning group consisting of BSU faculty and selected site-based PDS coordinators meets to ensure that all stakeholder needs are represented. The planning meeting consists of BSU faculty and select PDS coordinators. We meet to discuss topics of concern, interests, and our PDS programs. Based on our discussion, we create an agenda for SSP that includes discussions on: practicum students and teacher candidates, our mentoring classes Teach-Coach-Reflect (TCR) and Advanced-Teach-Coach-Reflect (ATCR), the teacher candidate exit portfolios, and teacher candidate and mentor
teacher action research. We assign who will be responsible for presenting and leading each discussion, and we create breakout sessions based on our goals for enhancing our use of social media, connecting methods courses to PDS curriculum, establishing ways to better know the needs of our teacher candidates, and previewing books for our inquiry groups. We decide who will lead each committee (breakout sessions) during SSP. We select the time and location for SSP and finalized the agenda. Finally, the presenters/leaders plan their presentations, discussions, and/or small group committee meetings on their own prior to coming together at Summer Strategic Planning.

The Day of Summer Strategic Planning
On the day of Summer Strategic Planning, all PDS partners (BSU faculty and field supervisors, school district and state department personnel, and PDS coordinators/principals) come together for the purpose of strengthening our PDS program. The day begins with the BSU PDS Network: State of the Union PowerPoint led by the BSU Professor and PDS Coordinator. The State of the Union addresses the BSU PDS signature programs including inquiry groups, action research, TCR/ATCR, on-site methods courses taught by both university and PDS faculty, teacher candidate exit portfolios, and a report from university and PDS faculty who attended and presented at the National Association for Professional Development Schools 2018 Conference. There are discussions on each of the signature programs. A note taker is identified so that we can use the information future planning. There is also a discussion on how to ensure the success of our teacher candidates by having the early practicum students placed in our PDS sites so that we would know the needs of these students and be better able to give input into the university courses and requirements. This discussion is followed by an update from our mentoring workshops coordinator on the progress of both of our mentoring workshops, TCR and ATCR. We discuss how many people have completed the workshops from each PDS site and make plans for future workshops.

During the afternoon breakout sessions, site-based PDS coordinators and BSU faculty lead mini-committee meetings on the topics identified to enhance our PDS Network: social media, methods and PDS collaboration, getting to know the needs of our teacher candidates, and previewing topics and books for our site-based inquiry groups. In each meeting, the groups discuss the topic and create a plan to move forward during the next school year. At the end of the day, each group presents their findings and their next steps. Finally, all information is compiled and gathered to be used during upcoming monthly PDS Network meetings.

Building Buy-in
Three major goals of the BSU PDS network are growing the effectiveness of our network, strengthening the school-university partnership, and expanding our reach to more teachers in the PDS site schools. Our site-based PDS coordinators play a central role in that effort, so involving them in the planning and implementation of SSP is crucial to moving forward and building efficacy within the network. Growing stronger as a network, however, necessitates increased buy-in from not only our PDS Coordinators, but from our many stakeholders as well. The PDS coordinators, the teachers and administrators at PDS site schools, the BSU university faculty, the student interns themselves, and our PGCPS (Prince George’s County Public Schools) OTD (Office of Talent Development) all work together to lay the framework for an overall experience that enriches everyone involved.

Within the summer strategic planning session, we are intentional about building that buy-in toward our goals in three important ways. First, we provide ample time within the agenda during State of the Union to share schoolhouse PDS successes and other highlights from the year at each of the network schools. At this time, some schools are also recognized for specific accomplishments related to PDS which allows coordinators to both contribute and gather great ideas from their colleagues. When asked about the impact of the session, one coordinator said, “I feel like I am beginning to pivot my thinking around how to involve the WHOLE school community in our PDS work even though they might not have interns,” and another remarked that her biggest take-away from the day was that she “got some ideas from other PDS Coordinators that will help [her] improve [her] role as PDS Coordinator.” Both of these comments are indicative of the fact that our sharing protocol works to build buy-in among our coordinators and grow our network’s effectiveness.

To intentionally expand the reach of our network, we extend invitations for SSP to as many stakeholders as possible. Our PDS coordinators are all invited to bring a teacher from their school to participate in the planning session. The adjunct Methods faculty are also invited to attend, along with the university faculty and intern supervisors. Additionally, partners from PGCPS OTD and our PDS representative from the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) is invited as well. We aim to cast a wide net to allow for as many perspectives to be added to our discussions and planning sessions as possible. Partners are self-seated at a series of circular tables in the session room, but they tend to mostly segregate themselves by role. Throughout the session work, discussion protocols are used to encourage crosstalk across groups and sharing out of ideas. These activities allowed for each major perspective to be presented and for participants to reflect on alternative views. Major takeaways of the session’s impact affirmed the “constant link and conversation between university and district partners,” recognized the success of “ongoing collaboration among ALL stakeholders,” and highlighted the importance of “maintaining and strengthening the partnership between BSU and the PDS schools.” Building a strong partnership involves strong relationships which help network stakeholders feel supported and valued, building further buy-in toward goals.
Finally, we deliberately designed the afternoon portion of the day-long Summer Strategic Planning as a series of four breakout sessions where PDS coordinators, PGPS, and MSDE partners, and university faculty were able to work on designing an action plan in an area of improvement for our PDS network. The four sessions included:

- A session focused on browsing and selecting books for PDS Inquiry Groups to be convened at PDS sites in the fall.
- A Methods and PDS Collaboration strategy session that aimed to improve the communication between Methods instructors and PDS Mentor teachers to improve the experience for interns.
- A Learning about Phase One students brainstorming session with the goal of developing a protocol for gathering and sharing information about Phase One interns to improve retention within the program.
- A Social Media/Technology framework planning session to explore ways to share information more widely and consistently across and among PDS school sites to reach all teachers more often and more effectively.

During the sessions it became evident that our hope for the breakout groups was being realized.

Stakeholders had selected groups where they had passion and expertise, so they shared insightful ideas, began to develop strategies, and even went so far as to assign further tasks to members of the groups to complete before our next meeting as a PDS network group in the fall. Reflections of the group after the breakout sessions indicate that these, too, were successful at building buy-in. One participant highlighted the network’s “continuous/never-ending commitment to seek enrichment/improvement.” Another was enriched by her session’s “suggestions on strategies to better meet the needs of the interns,” and a third coordinator reported that the most impactful part of Summer Strategic Planning was the “opportunity for discussion” that occurred during these breakouts.

Without buy-in, a program will not grow and fully realize its potential. Our PDS network is continuing to grow stronger because we are actively seeking to improve the buy-in of our stakeholders. Ultimately Summer Strategic Planning plays a major part in this effort because it is the time when we come together and set the course for the coming year, allowing each of our stakeholders to “support PDS plans to enhance overall performance of teacher candidates to develop great teachers,” within our network and beyond.

PDS Partnerships as a Means to Recruiting and Retaining Effective Teachers

Seth Parsons, Audra Parker, Kristien Zenkov, George Mason University
Adam Erbrecht, Jesse Kraft, Christine Slattery, Fairfax County Public Schools

School leaders currently face two significant and recurring personnel difficulties in education: teacher shortages and teacher retention. As a result, the challenges of how to recruit and retain effective teachers rarely leave administrators’ minds. The reasons for the current teacher shortage and ongoing teacher attrition are multiple and complex. Common factors include low salaries, restrictive testing policies, lack of empowerment, intensified working conditions, diminished societal status, and shifting population cycles (Clandinin et al., 2015). Our purpose in this article is not to unpack the reasons for these concerns but rather to present our learning from extensive experiences in combatting these recruitment and retention trends through our engagement in Professional Development School (PDS) relationships.

George Mason University’s Elementary Education program was an early adopter of the PDS philosophy, starting its PDS program in 1991, and the authors of this article have been engaged in Mason’s PDS program for the last 2-10 years. Our team includes three university professors and three elementary school principals. The professors are all tenured faculty at a Research 1 institution, who actively engage in school partnership work. Indeed, as boundary spanning teacher educators, each spends at least one day a week at a local school facilitating a school-university partnership.

The principals each lead one of our collaborative inquiry PDS schools in this school-university partnership network (see Parker, Parsons, Groth, & Brown, 2016 for the different types of PDSs in our network). As such, each site has a critical mass of interns (typically 5) placed at the site for a full academic year. In addition, a university faculty member partners with the site for one full day each week to support interns, mentor teachers, engage in school inquiry, and facilitate professional development efforts. While these schools are located in a large, suburban, and affluent school district outside Washington DC, recruitment and retention remain pressing concerns. There is currently a severe shortage of elementary school teachers in the district despite being a wealthy and densely populated region of the United States.

Additionally, each partnership site considered in this article is a Title I school. Title I schools typically face significant challenges with teacher recruitment and retention. In our combined 25 years working in this partnership context, we have seen the benefit of intentional and thoughtful school-university partnerships, guided by the PDS philosophy, in recruiting and retaining teachers in specific schools. We describe our learning below.

Supporting Recruitment and Retention
To prepare this article, the authors met together to brainstorm, collect, and organize our thoughts on why our PDSs have been successful in recruiting and retaining elementary school teachers in spite of being (a) in a region that is in desperate need of more teachers and (b) in Title I schools, which have traditionally faced increased difficulty in recruitment and retention. In the meeting, the three administrators engaged in a robust dialogue expressing their thoughts while the professors took notes to document these reflections, chiming in only occasionally. We then put the collective notes from the meeting in a shared wiki document where all six of us looked for patterns in the ideas expressed. Through this extended engagement and review, three themes emerged: familiarity, investment, and continued growth.

Theme 1: Familiarity
The principals shared that PDS interns are especially appealing as prospective teachers not only because they are well prepared through a clinically-centered teacher education program, but also because of their deep familiarity with their internship site. Teacher candidates complete a yearlong internship in a PDS. By the end of this experience, they are familiar with the school culture, student population, faculty and

References

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The school, likewise, is invested in the teacher candidate. Teacher and administrators have taken a personal and committed interest in teacher candidates’ development. Principals shared that faculty become teacher candidates’ cheerleaders—and they noted that they do not just hear from mentor teachers, they also hear from mentor teachers’ colleagues who have gotten to know the teacher candidates through grade-level planning and meetings: “They are beating down my door encouraging me to hire this specific intern,” shared one principal. In this regard, the principals shared that it behooves them to be personally involved in our partnership and to invest in the interns individually—by participating in seminars, observing their instruction, and hosting intern-focused events such as mock interviews.

Reflective of the reciprocal nature of PDS partnerships, the school and the new teachers are invested in the PDS program. The school—its staff, faculty, and administration—buy into the partnership in part because, as noted below in our discussion of our final theme, it supports their professional growth. These veteran professionals recognize that these partnerships provide them with potential pools of high-quality colleagues.

This investment is cyclical, self-sustaining, and a unique form of “pay it forward” professional development and teacher retention. For instance, at one of our Title I PDSs, where the first author was the university facilitator for seven years, roughly 35% of the faculty were former interns at the school. In their first years teaching, they received continued support from the university facilitator and former mentor teachers. They also supported the new interns at the school by inviting them into their classrooms, attending seminars at the school, and becoming mentor teachers after their induction years. This level of investment not only connects university learning with school-based practice: it enhances the recruitment and retention of new teachers.

Theme 3: Continued Growth
“Continued growth” is the third theme that emerged from our collaborative inquiry into the impact of our partnership on teacher recruitment and retention. Such growth is a given for the teacher candidates: They are in a teacher preparation program and their primary focus is on their professional development as a teacher. However, administrators, university faculty, school specialists, and classroom teachers are all growing professionally as well.

For example, when classroom teachers serve as mentor teachers, they must articulate their planning and instructional decisions, which forces them to engage in reflective practice that brings to the fore assumptions about teaching and learning that might have otherwise remained unexamined. Likewise, teacher candidates are often required to attempt instructional techniques that are different than those of their mentor teachers. By observing lessons and approaches that teacher candidates and university facilitators bring with them from the university, practicing teachers expand their understanding of instruction and diversify their instructional repertoire.

Principals explained that by inviting teachers to serve as mentor teachers, they are acknowledging their effective practice. In short: “I trust you to be an excellent model for a novice teacher.” This “ups the ante” for teachers, those who are mentor teachers and those who desire to be mentor teachers. Teaching is a field that has long lacked a career ladder (e.g., Tye & O’Brien, 2002), with the primary form of professional advancement requiring that teachers leave the classroom, to become a specialist or an administrator. The mentor teacher role—which often includes those teachers serving as guest speakers in teacher education courses—provides a school-based leadership role for exemplary teachers and recognition from professionals beyond their administrators that s/he is modeling exceptional practice.

Action research is another vehicle through which the full range of PDS stakeholders...
grow professionally. For example, during the spring semester of a yearlong internship in our elementary program, teacher candidates complete action research projects with guidance from university faculty and their mentor teachers. Mentor teachers provide insights on the design, implementation, and findings of such projects. Via the systematic data collection on a relevant issue in the classroom, action research supports teacher candidates and mentor teachers in reflecting on their practice. In some instances, these action research projects have organically evolved into professional development tools for teams of teachers, in collaboration with the university facilitator, supporting effective practice and professional growth for all stakeholders.

In addition, by spending one day a week in the same school and classroom, building strong relationships with administrators, specialists, and teachers, university facilitators remain grounded in an everyday inquiry into teaching and learning. University faculty engaged in partnership work are committed to (a) supporting current and future teachers and (b) enhancing the field’s understanding of effective teaching and learning. Close work with practitioners optimizes both of these efforts. And, just as university facilitators learn with and grow from school specialists and teachers, they have much to share with practitioners, including insights gained from maintaining a consistent presence in schools and classrooms and their commitment to staying abreast of current research on effective educational practice.

Our principal partners noted that continued growth is not only effective at enhancing all PDS constituents’ teaching practices. Consistent improvement is rewarding and helps one feel meaningful in a profession that can often be disheartening. When professionals are engaged in these authentic forms of continual growth, they naturally feel renewed, which positively increases the likelihood of retaining high quality teachers in the profession.

Conclusion

The teacher shortage in U.S. schools is a longstanding concern—one that appears to be worsening. An important aspect of school administrators’ jobs, therefore, is recruiting and retaining high-quality teachers. In this article, we shared our success in recruiting and retaining effective elementary school teachers through school-university partnerships. Our PDSs support schools’ and new teachers’ familiarity with one another, investment in one another, and continued growth. As administrators continue to grapple with a historic teacher shortage and as teacher educators turn their gaze to clinically-based practice, we urge both parties to consider the recently rejuvenated and refined PDS philosophy as a means of effectively preparing teachers, helping them find teaching positions that are a good fit, and retaining them in the teaching profession.

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Leveraging the Clinical Practice Commission Report to Refine our PDS Work

Cynthia Stunkard, Kutztown University

The American Association for Colleges of Teacher Education (AACTE) Clinical Practice Commission’s report indicated that Professional Development Schools were a strong model to prepare future educators. Kutztown University in East Central Pennsylvania is in the second year of a PDS model with five area school districts. Both the school districts and the university have benefitted from the model in that short time (Essential 1). As the PDS coordinator, the most striking benefit is the shift in relationships. Kutztown University (KU) had an established relationship with each of the districts, but now the five PDS superintendents are actively working with the faculty at KU to create different, comprehensive experiences for our future teachers (Essential 2). The current focus is two-fold. One experience is creating a connection with the faculty at KU and each school district during the junior experience that carries over to the senior clinical experience. The second experience is our cohort.

For undergraduate pre-service teachers, we have developed a cohort model with five PDS districts (Essential 2). In the fall of their freshman year (first semester on campus), the superintendents, dean, faculty, and PDS coordinator meet with students during an informational meeting to discuss the cohort project. The students fill out an application, complete an interview, 25-30 students are accepted and notified of acceptance, and subsequently placed in a classroom matching future teaching objectives. For example, a music education major, who plays the cello, was placed in a secondary school with an orchestra teacher, the student’s future teaching goal. In the College of Education, there are multiple departments including special education, elementary education, middle level education, secondary education, library sciences, and counseling. In a separate College, art and music educators are invited to participate in the cohort. The second semester student starts observations in the classroom and, using a continuum (Figure 1) developed by the PDS coordinator, dean, and superintendents, completes 30-hours of observations and weekly reflective journal entries (Essential 4 & 5). This relationship starts as a second semester freshmen and is continued for the following three semesters until the formal clinical experiences begin during the junior year (for a total of four semesters in one mentor teacher.}
classroom). This long-term relationship between KU student and PDS mentor teacher allows the KU student to participate in two beginning of the year experiences, and two end of the year experiences. The intention is for the KU student to complete one of the formal clinical experiences (junior or senior experience) in the cohort classroom to facilitate an accelerated integration into the classroom due to the relationship built over previous semesters. We are currently in the process of duplicating the cohort model for a second round of students entering the program. In the future, the College of Education hopes to have students of every level in a school building including observation to clinical experience as a modified residency program, which is another model embraced by PDS and the AACTE Clinical Practice Commission Report.

Faculty, at times, are the biggest barrier to the current PDS model. Not because they are adverse to the process, but because faculty have established relationships with certain districts other than the established five. The faculty have spent considerable amounts of time and effort to establish a working relationship with schools and would like to enhance the current relationship to include a PDS model. As a result of multiple meetings, the College of Education is in the process of formulating the PDS process with five additional districts with whom faculty have a well-developed relationship. For example, Kutztown has one of four teacher preparation programs for the teaching of the student with a visual impairment. A strong faculty relationship has been established with Overbrook School for the Blind in Philadelphia. It is the one of the schools to be added to the PDS network in the next school year (Essential 6).

The superintendents were supportive of the focus group scheduled for the end of the semester with the first cohort students. As the PDS Coordinator, suggestions were made to share the cohort student information with the mentor teachers and have a focus group meeting with each districts’ mentor teachers. This created an additional relationship with the PDS mentor teachers. The information from each district was shared with the teachers, superintendents, dean, and placement coordinator (Essentials 1, 2, &3).

Based on the feedback from surveys, journal entries, and focus groups, the content of the cohort program is changing slightly (Essentials #7 & 8). Most second semester freshmen students have completed few educational courses and may have little or no background in educational pedagogies. One suggestion from the mentor teachers’ focus group was a targeted journal entry for specific items for observation. The cohort student was in the classroom for the end of the school year observing end of the year procedures. Now, the student is able to be in the classroom for the beginning of the year and observe different procedures. Mentor teachers suggested the student could write about routines, expectations, transitions, classroom management techniques, interactions with teachers, parents, and administration, as well as lesson plan delivery. An online shell was created as a repository for journal entries, questions, discussions, and hour log repositories.

Suggestions on the continuum were also made for the level of teaching that could be performed. This included one-on-one reading or math instruction, small group, centers or station teaching, and reading a book. One superintendent took that information and added, "the planning of an

Table 1: Continuum of PDS Work

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cohort Year 1: The Work Life of a Teacher</th>
<th>Freshman Semester: In partner school</th>
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<tr>
<td>Through observation, discussion, and journal reflection, investigate and develop an understanding of the role of a teacher in the school community.</td>
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1. Identify the responsibilities and obligations of a teacher to students, parents/guardians and colleagues throughout the day. Focus observations and discussions on the following areas:
   a. Daily procedures
   b. Planning for instruction
   c. Meeting student needs both remediation and acceleration
   d. Managing the group
   e. Meeting with colleagues
   f. Communicating with parents/guardians and parent/guardian groups

2. Observe teachers make decisions throughout the day. Focus observations and discussions on the following areas:
   a. Knowing when and what to teach
   b. Responding appropriately to student needs
   c. Adapting curriculum and instructional materials

3. Identify the members of the school community and their roles. How does the school community work together to benefit students? Focus observations and discussions on the following personnel:
   a. Principal/Assistant Principal/Dean of Students
   b. Guidance counselor/social worker (if applicable)
   c. Special education teacher/gifted education
   d. Related services (speech, occupational therapy, speech therapy, school psychologist, behavior interventionist)

Cohort Year 2: Two Semesters The Environment of the Classroom

Sophomore Semesters: In partner school

Through observation, discussion, and journal reflection, investigate and develop an understanding of classroom environment; how teachers develop a community of learners, how expectations are developed and how the environment effects student learning.

1. Observe and classify the interactions teachers have with students and student have with each other throughout the school day. Focus observations and/or discussions on the following areas:
   a. How interactions set the tone for the classroom environment
   b. How students and teachers communicate
   c. Students interactions with each other

2. Identify evidence in the classroom of the importance of learning and student success. Focus observations and discussions on the following areas:
   a. Student work displayed (exemplars)
   b. Prompt, charts, messages displayed
   c. The set-up of the furniture and spaces in the room – physical environment

3. Develop an understanding of the routines, procedures, and expectations. Focus observations and discussions on the following areas:
   a. How are routines, procedures, and expectations developed?
   b. How are routines, procedures, and expectations enforced?
   c. Does this seem to take over the environment or is it in the background?
Table 1: Continuum of PDS Work Continued

Cohort Year 3: The Planning and Preparation Necessary for Success

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Junior Semester: Placed with partner teacher for remaining semester prior to clinical experiences</th>
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<tr>
<td>Through observation, discussion, journal reflection and implementation of practice, develop an understanding of the planning and preparation necessary for student success.</td>
</tr>
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</table>

1. Develop an in-depth understanding of the content as well as the students’ level of understanding and how to best meet the student needs. Focus observations and discussions on the following areas:
   a. How does a teacher learn new material?
   b. What are the professional development offerings? Who leads them?
   c. Ways to determine students level of understanding.
   d. How do lessons meet students’ level of understanding?

2. Develop the ability to plan an effective lesson, incorporating necessary differentiation based upon the students’ needs. Focus observations and discussions on the following areas:
   a. Lesson design; the components of effective instruction
   b. Differentiation; adapt and modify content and materials to meet student need
   c. Utilization of available resources
   d. What is the process to secure necessary resources to meet the various needs of students if they are not readily available?

3. Develop an understanding of the importance of effective assessment techniques and how to incorporate assessment in instruction. Focus observations and discussions on the following areas:
   a. Formative assessment
   b. Summative assessment
   c. Ways to determine students level of understanding.
   d. How does benchmarking play a role in determining the academic needs of students?

Cohort Year 4 - Putting it all Together: Instruction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Junior or Senior Clinical Experience: Remain with partner teacher</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Student Teaching and the development of consistent habits of practice to reflect on pedagogy to develop a continuous improvement cycle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Possibility of a residency for students who remain with mentor teacher from freshman year through student teaching.</td>
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Mentoring First Time Authors

Dawn Nowlin, Whitehall Elementary School

From the Editorial Team: When PDS Partners changed their name to PDS Partners: Bridging Research and Practice, we also became a peer reviewed journal. It is important to us as editors that our journal represent all PDS partners including teacher candidates, mentor teachers, school district partners and members of the higher ed community. In order to support new and emerging authors our Assistant Editor Dawn Nowlin a 5th grade teacher in a PDS, will be offering support throughout the writing process. Here is her message:

Have you ever read through professional journals and thought, “I would like to write about my PDS experiences and to be published but I wonder if I am qualified to write and share an article with my colleagues?” I also wonder how to get started to tell my story. These thoughts are understandable but You are exactly the type of teacher or teacher candidate who can write an article reflecting your PDS work written by and for Mentor Teachers working in PDS settings. As teachers, we are constantly researching, reflecting, and redesigning our teaching to support student achievement. Why not share what you are doing in your PDS classroom with others? PDS Partners is the perfect place for you to share what you are doing in your PDS. If you are anxious about writing and publishing an article, I suggest writing with a colleague or colleagues. My first article I co-authored with three other people and it made the process much less intimidating and daunting. The more articles I have co-authored and reviewed the more I realize that people writing these articles are just like me. Teachers working with students of all ages, using the latest research, technology, and resources to help their students achieve at high levels. The review process will provide detailed feedback about your. If you have questions or would like support, feel free to contact me at dawn.nowlin@pgcps.org.

PARTNERS IS THE PERFECT PLACE FOR YOU TO SHARE WHAT YOU ARE DOING
Cohabitation: A University and District Partnership Living in the Same Evaluation House

Mercedes Tichenor, Chris Colwell, Elizabeth Hines and Kathy Piechura, Stetson University

The idea of school districts and teacher preparation programs partnering to leverage the skills, assets, and expertise that both organizations possess is certainly well established in the literature as a best practice (Burton & Greher, 2007; Darling-Hammond, et. al. 2007; Zeichner, 2010). School districts and teacher preparation programs share a common mission to assure that every child is taught by a highly motivated and well-prepared teacher, and both institutions are accountable for the success of that mission. A core component of the accountability system centers on the ability of teacher preparation programs, for pre-service teachers, and P-12 districts, for in-service teachers, to accurately evaluate the quality of teaching that is occurring in the classroom. The Florida Department of Education, recognizing the importance of a high quality, transparent teacher evaluation and feedback system established a set of goals that included building support structures and partnerships to, among other objectives:

a. Develop K-20 initiatives to build bridges from elementary education through secondary education to higher education
b. Deepen pre-service teacher content knowledge
c. Strengthen pre-service teachers’ clinical field experiences
d. Deepen the collaboration between teacher preparation programs and the districts they serve and
e. Align supports to teacher evaluation systems.

This article describes how a university and district partnership aligned the evaluation system for teacher candidates by using the local school district’s teacher evaluation system. Specifically, this article discusses how the university’s evaluation system became imbedded with the district’s system using the Danielson Framework for Teaching. Further, the article outlines benefits and limitations of living in the same evaluation house.

The Partnership

The university and partner district have a long history of collaboration and innovation. Partnerships involving single gender pedagogy, restorative practice, PDS school partnerships, embedded leadership training, and STEAM programs are just a few of the many multi-year, multi-school, partnerships in place between the university and the school district.

The partnership developed goals that focus on developing exemplary practice to maximize student outcomes, providing optimum sites for pre-service teacher training, offering connected in-service teacher professional development, and implementing reflective inquiry to enhance teacher and student learning and development. One aspect of the PDS partnership has always been that the university provides research support for innovative ideas presented at the school level. This shared commitment to innovative and reflective practice by all participants has led to strong relationships as university and school faculties have been engaged actively in the day-to-day functioning of initiatives. With the trust and relationships that have been built over the years between the school district and university, the decision to embark on an innovative approach to align pre-service and in-service evaluation systems was a natural evolution of the partnership.

How Does Cohabitation Work?

Both institutions have existing, high quality and robust teacher evaluation systems in place. The university teacher preparation system and the district in-service system both utilize the Danielson Framework for Teaching as the basis for their evaluation systems; sharing a teaching framework for evaluation purposes is essential for cohabitation to be effective. Further, both institutions recognize that quality teacher evaluation can be used to improve teacher performance. However, each system also uses different web-based applications, different academic language, different feedback systems, and different training protocols. For example, the university utilizes LiveText to collect pre-service teacher data from different classes and field experiences across semesters. LiveText also allows university faculty to share feedback with pre-service teachers, cooperating teachers, and other university supervisors. However, much of the feedback provided through Livetext focuses on collecting evidence to share formative feedback on strengths and areas of focus for improvement. On the other hand, the school district’s online system focuses primarily on the evidence collected to establish a summative rating. In addition, the school district ratings range from unsatisfactory to distinguished, a 1-4 rating scale, whereas the university uses a 1-3 rating scale with the highest performance indicator being a score of proficient. The score of 4, distinguished, is not part of the pre-service scale because university faculty felt that it was not reasonable for a pre-service teacher to earn a score of distinguished when assessed against the rigorous standards of the Danielson rubric.

The goal of this initiative was to align the university’s summative evaluation of pre-service teachers with the district’s teacher evaluation system. To make this possible, the school district allowed the teacher preparation program to reside within the district’s evaluation system. In other words, university faculty and pre-service teachers are housed within the school district’s technological system, allowing pre-service teachers to participate in the summative evaluation cycle just as in-service teachers in the district. Within the district’s technological system, the university is reflected as a district high school, university faculty are reflected as district principals, and pre-service teachers are reflected as district teachers. Training for using the school district’s system was provided by district level personnel who continue to support the university by adding new cohorts of pre-service teachers in their system each semester.

Benefits and Limitations

Both institutions recognize that combining forces to implement one overarching seamless summative evaluation system that allows pre-service teachers to experience and benefit from the same evaluation system, with the same level of rigor that pre-service teachers would experience as in-service teachers, has many benefits. These benefits are evident during pre-service teachers’ internship experiences and well into their first year of teaching. When using a unified evaluation system, pre-service teachers, cooperating teachers and university supervisors share common language around the shared teaching framework and rubric criteria. Further, because cooperating teachers are evaluated with the same system and are familiar with the evaluation cycle, they are able to provide on-going support not only in the classroom, but also with the particulars of the assessment system. In addition, being active in the district’s assessment system also adds a level of professionalism for pre-service teachers. Pre-service teachers are no longer “just a student” but are evaluated with the same system and using the same criteria and process as their cooperating teachers. Recent conversations with district coaches assigned to beginning teachers suggest that graduates who have participated in the shared evaluation system are “more prepared and polished”. In addition, district personnel report reduced need for mentoring of new teachers and positive effects on K-6 learning. We believe this is, in part, because graduates are comfortable with how they will be evaluated in the district and are familiar with the evaluation process. Moreover, since both institutions use the same framework for teaching and evaluation rubric, pre-service teachers understand how effective teaching is defined and evaluated. Thus far, the initiative has impacted both the teacher preparation program and the district’s teacher induction program.

The challenges to implement one overarching evaluation system that aligns a university pre-service evaluation system with a school district in-service evaluation system are many. Both institutions must be willing to share technology, commit to new training, new protocols, and consolidate systems. As previously mentioned, the district’s evaluation system is primarily used for
summative purposes. However, at the university level, a developmental approach is emphasized where pre-service teachers are provided with continuous and on-going feedback throughout their program. The district’s summative system does not adequately collect data across the pre-service teacher’s university career to provide the detailed formative feedback needed, which requires the university to keep a separate evaluation system. A common complaint of university supervisors is the district’s computerized system does not “talk” to the university system.

Another limitation to this initiative is not all cooperating teachers are familiar enough with their scoring criteria to comfortably assist pre-service teachers. We thought that all district teachers would be well acquainted with the district’s evaluation model to effectively use the evaluation rubric to assess their interns. However, this was not always the case. To help cooperating teachers with providing effective feedback on the scoring criteria, we provided trainings on the scoring rubric and how to provide actionable feedback. We also examined if university supervisors and cooperating teachers were scoring the same constructs similarly in the system. This training has taken a lot of time, and to be effective, needs to be on-going. However, we believe the benefits to pre-service teachers outweigh these limitations. This system produces a more confident first year teacher who understands and is comfortable with the assessment and evaluation process that in-service teachers experience.

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Book Club: Using Gaming to Engage Students and Increase Comprehension

Vickie Johnston, Florida Gulf Coast University
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Successful Professional Development School (PDS) partnerships provide teacher candidates with a rich and relevant classroom experience and evidence of learning gains that can be seen in P-12 students. As university and school partnerships continue to evolve, supporting stakeholders must team up to develop a vision for a successful way to implement this experience. One such program was developed as an afterschool book club. This book club was held at Pinewoods Elementary and involved a literacy methods class from Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU) which utilized a gaming program called Cranium CoRE. Three essential principles associated with PDS were central to the success of this PDS literacy partnership. These principles included a comprehensive mission that was broader in its outreach and scope than the mission of any partner and that furthered the education profession and its responsibility to advance equity within schools and the broader community; a school–university culture committed to the preparation of future educators that embraced their active engagement in the school community; and a model that had dedicated and shared resources and formal rewards and recognition structures.

An essential element to this afterschool book club was the implementation of Cranium CoRE by teacher candidates during literature circle discussions that utilized Sunshine State Young Readers Award (SSYRA) books. The SSYRA Program is “a statewide reading motivational program for students in grades 3 through 8, in a collaborative effort between the Florida Association of Media in Education (FAME) and the Florida Department of Education (DOE)” (FAME, 2015, par. 1). The SSYRA was created “to encourage students to read independently for pleasure and to read books that are on, above, and below their reading level in order to improve their reading fluency” (FAME, 2015, par. 1). Cranium CoRE is a gaming program that focuses on the process of critical thinking during discussions. It utilizes a web-based system to engage students and give them the skills to comprehend the content of a book. Higher order thinking questions imbedded in this game are utilized for thematic conversation in order to improve comprehension skills.

The PDS Model
In this PDS model, teacher candidates working in teams were in charge of running a literature circle with approximately five, third through fifth grade students. Because Pinewoods Elementary places emphasis on positive relationships between students, staff, and parents, there were training meetings held with the teacher candidates prior to the start of the book club. Candidates also read, watched, and processed information about best practices in literacy instruction prior to facilitating each literature circle session. They meet with Andy Larson, inventor of Cranium CoRE, in order to learn the process of writing higher level questions for trade books, prior to the start of the book club, as well. The media center at this partner school ordered 10-15 copies of each SSYRA books during the summer prior to the start of the school year, so that the books would be available for the participating students to checkout.

Once the book club started, the teacher candidates met once a week for two hours at Pinewoods; the first hour was spent conducting literature circles with third to fifth grade students, and the second hour was spent attending class in order to debrief and process. The students attending the book club were assigned a reading to complete each week and would then spend the first half hour engaging in the literacy activities that the candidates had prepared; these were hands-on multisensory activities to facilitate comprehension. During the last half hour, teacher candidates would play the Cranium CoRE game, and students would continue to discuss the text and defend their answers. Candidates utilized laptops and iPads to access Cranium CoRE games that correlated to the SSYRA books their groups were reading. After leading the book club for an hour, the teacher candidates then met with their university professor for class in the media center at Pinewoods after their literature circle students had gone home. This professional
Development school provided an opportunity for our teacher candidates to implement best practices in literacy instruction as well as allowing them time to debrief and process the experience. Inclusion of a variety of stakeholders created an opportunity for discussion about best practices in literacy instruction and higher-level questioning and encouraged quality instruction in literacy teaching and application.

**Literature Circles**

In 1996, the National Standards for the English Language Arts, issued by the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) and the International Reading Association (currently International Literacy Association), endorsed collaborative literature-based lessons in which students take on a more prominent role in choosing, reading, and discussing books. Literature circles were cited as an example of best practices in literacy instruction (Spelberger & Halpern, 2002). According to Daniels (2006), “Literature circles are small, peer-led discussion groups who have chosen to read the same story, poem, article, or book” (p. 2). Literature circles allow students to engage in meaningful student-directed dialogue about books they read which promotes oral language and literacy growth for P-12 students. Most book clubs involve student participants reading the same book so that there is a shared context for discussion, but a key component to a successful literature circle is student choice (Atwell, 2014). Atwell (2014) argues that students need a voice in choosing what to read and that the teacher, or in this case the teacher candidate, can make the decision about how to facilitate in-depth conversations about books and how to demonstrate effective writing.

Gambrell (2011) found that small-group discussion promotes a deeper understanding of text, higher level thinking, and improved communication skills. Through participation in literature circles, students can also reflect on and respond to the connections between current books they are reading and others they have read, their own personal experiences, and the world around them, engaging them and motivating them to read for pleasure. In addition, an afterschool book club should be a positive, motivating environment, so candidates were careful to create fun and engaging activities to support comprehension and vocabulary. The purpose of a literature circle was for students to interact with peers and their chosen text through ongoing discussions in order to help them extend their reading skills, develop opinions about literature, and find evidence from the text to support their opinions.

**Gaming**

What makes this PDS partnership program unique is the use of a gaming program to facilitate literature circle discussions during this third to fifth grade afterschool book club. Wade and Fauske (2014) argued that computer-mediated discussions could foster dialogue and discussion because technology is becoming increasingly interactive and collaborative; consequently, many educators see gaming as an effective tool for engaging today’s students. Researchers agree that teaching reading in innovative ways by utilizing a web-based system can engage students in their learning (Gambrell, 2011; Wade & Fauske, 2014).

Cranium CoRE is a cross-curricular solution to foster engagement and higher level thinking at both the elementary and secondary level. It is a web 2.0 based television-style game show that has games based on hundreds of book titles. The focus of the game process is discussion. The goal is to have students be interdependent, collaborative learners, and to think independently at times. The process used in Cranium CoRE includes reading aloud a section of a book, playing the game (choosing an answer to a higher-level discussion question), discussing the text, and defending the answer. Because the students in the book club were required to complete the readings at home prior to engaging in the book club each week, teacher candidates would play the game, discuss the text, and defend their answer during their Cranium CoRE time with the students.

The discussion model involved with this process correlates to what we know about best practices in literacy instruction. Best practices in literacy instruction provides students with opportunities to read a text with an intensive focus on meaning and lively and critical discussions regarding the text (IRA, 2012). Most importantly, these book discussion groups are student-centered: they encourage students to choose what they read and to lead their own discussions for maximum engagement. This process is vital to comprehension instruction. According to IRA (2012):

> This means that students must learn to engage independently in critical reading, determining what a text says explicitly, making logical inferences, and analyzing a text’s craft and structure to determine how those affect the text’s meaning and tone, evaluating the effectiveness or value of the text, and using the information and ideas drawn from texts (often referred to as “evidence”) as the basis of one’s own arguments, presentations, and claims (IRA, 2012, p. 2).

This book club facilitated by teacher candidates at FGCU has been effective for teaching reading strategies as well as improving literacy. Each year students from the Pinewoods Book Club participate in the Battle of the Books. The state-wide competition is based on the Sunshine State Young Readers Award (SSYRA) novels, and students are challenged to read all the books on the list and then compete against each other, testing their recall of the year’s SSYRA novels. The Spring of 2016 after participating in the FGCU led Book Club and Cranium Core Program, students at Pinewoods Elementary came in fourth place in a county-wide Battle of the Books competition.

**Conclusion**

Like many professional development school partnerships, the university, the local school, and other stakeholders teamed up to develop a vision for the implementation of an afterschool book club that would incorporate research-based literacy instruction and field experience application while embracing the essentials principles associated with PDS. Several essentials principles associated with PDS were central to the success of this PDS literacy partnership. Not only did we develop a school-university culture that was committed to the preparation of future educators that embraced their active engagements in the school community, but we extended our design to the community outside the school and university gates by involving Cranium CoRE. Cranium CoRE’s participation strengthened our PDS model and positively affected both teacher candidates and participating students. This PDS model had dedicated and shared resources and formal rewards and recognition structures throughout the semester, utilizing books marks and SSYRA books which were purchased by the school and access to the Cranium CoRE gaming program was provided to each participant at no cost which provided in depth questions to many of the SSYRA books. Teacher candidates benefited from professional development trainings from both the district and Cranium CoRE in which they learned how to utilize classroom management strategies when working with small groups and how to write higher-level thinking questions for book discussions. Faculty, media staff, literacy coordinators, and Cranium CoRE facilitators all contributed to delivering quality innovative learning communities and collaborated on instruction in the area of best practices and the role that assessment plays in driving instruction for students.

The six language arts, as designated by the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) and the International Reading Association (IRA) are listening, speaking, reading, writing,
viewing, and visually representing. Gaming is uniquely suited to address these forms of literacy development, from teaching reading strategies in the classroom to supporting motivation and engagement in reading. Book clubs are most successful when teacher candidates can plan for student-centered discussions; and the more opportunities students have to engage in reading activities, the greater their chance for developing positive lifelong reading habits.

References


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### Listening to Your Gut: How to Address Interns Who Raise Red Flags: The Case of Two Interns

**Jamie Silverman, John Foley, Towson University**

**Introduction**

There are instances when interns demonstrate red flags during their internship. While occasionally these develop in their initial educational coursework, often they do not present until the intern’s final year when they are spending more time in a professional school setting. In fact, in the Secondary and Middle School program at Towson University we have observed these red flags present in approximately 10% of interns per semester. If these red flags are not addressed in a timely effective and ethical manner, an intern’s program completion and degree is at stake.

When red flags do present, mentors and university supervisors must communicate their concerns with one another as well as with the intern in a structured process to help the intern realize the issue, reflect on it and begin to resolve it. In their article entitled, “The Importance of Role Perceptions in the Student Teaching Triad,” Johnson and Napper-Owen (2011) highlight the importance of communication between the triad or mentor, intern, and university supervisor as it relates to creating successful student teaching experiences for interns. Johnson and Napper-Owen (2011) state, “the formation of a collaborative group is essential for a successful and positive experience for the entire triad. Triad members acknowledge the formation of the triad and then learn how to function effectively within that triad (p. 44).” Johnson and Napper-Owen (2011) continue to discuss the importance of the triad’s communication to enhance the student teacher’s experience and assist them in a successful transition from intern to new teacher.

Mentors and supervisors want to support interns throughout their internship experience. They want to see their intern thrive and grow, but there are times when interns struggle. Seibert, Clark, Kilbridge, & Peterson (2006) discuss just one situation that arises when interns do present red flags: “Mentor teachers sometimes struggle to help novices overcome problems that they, themselves, didn’t struggle with in their own learning to teach journeys” (p. 419-20). It is important that these mentors are open and honest with the supervisor about not only the red flags they observe in their intern’s performance, but also in the identification of their own need for strategies and help to better support the intern to become more proficient in the classroom. This focus on communication between all stakeholders involved in the support of an intern’s success during their teaching experience in a professional development (PDS) school is supported by the 4th essential of a PDS which focuses on participants’ commitment to innovation and reflection in practice.

In the following discussion, we will address two examples of red flags that interns have presented in our program and assistance plans that were created to respond to each; one occurring during the part-time internship and the second which developed during the full-time internship. Communication and a shared commitment to aid both interns’ growth and successful completion of the internship are apparent in both cases.

### Development of the Assistance Plan: An Innovative and Reflective Practice

During the 2016-2017 academic year, we encountered two interns who demonstrated areas of concern that required more than just feedback during a post-observation conference. We needed to identify behaviors that were raising red flags, identify those behaviors with the interns, outline clear expectations and changes in professional behavior as well as set dates for the accomplishment of these changes and note consequences if these concerns were not addressed and resolved. We also believed that it was essential to include mentor teachers, university supervisors, the PDS Institute of Higher Education (IHE) Liaisons, the intern, and the university’s department chair in this process. Each of these stakeholders played a vital role in the reflection and development of a support system to address the concerns the interns presented and to begin creating a plan to encourage the interns’ growth as they resolved each concern. Seibert et. al. (2006) comment on the importance of bringing various stakeholders to the table when discussing intern issues. They state:

Occasionally, mentor teachers see or know things about the preservice teachers based on their close contact with the interns that the university supervisor cannot. On other occasions, the distance afforded in the role of university field instructor or liaison may provide a more objective perspective. In the final analysis, both mentor teacher and university personnel work together to provide the optimum learning experience for interns while constantly keeping the program standards in their sights. (p. 421)

With the stakeholders present at various stages of development and with the philosophy that we are in our roles to support interns and help them grow by providing extra assistance when needed, we began to reflect on each intern’s case and create an assistance plan.

### The Case of Intern A

Our first case dealt with an intern who presented several red flags related to professionalism which developed during her part-time internship. Intern A arrived late to her part-time internship on a few
An abbreviated and scaled down template of the assistance plan used in cases of interns A and B.

A failed to improve and correct these behaviors, as the assistance plan was the language that Intern A needed to address each concern and as a solution. Finally, we identified specific deadlines to contribute to help Intern A successfully meet each expectation. We listed supports that each stakeholder would offer. 

As the PDS Liaison and instructor for Intern A’s part-time internship, we sat down with the department chair and mentor to create an assistance plan. First, we identified the three major concerns mentioned above. Next, we discussed specific behaviors we expected to see change and discussed solutions to each of these concerns. We listed supports that each stakeholder would contribute to help Intern A successfully meet each solution. Finally, we identified specific deadlines for Intern A to address each concern and as a result, fulfill each solution. Clearly noted in this assistance plan was the language that if Intern A failed to improve and correct these behaviors, removal from the program per the department chair’s decision would result. We also noted that these issues must not present again in the full-time internship else the same penalty would occur for Intern A. In addition, Intern A’s mentor and I created additional support goals for Intern A when she returned in the spring for her full-time internship. Our hope was that by providing specific supports for Intern A, we could prevent future red flags from occurring. Such support included time management tools like creating daily checklists for Intern A and co-teaching more difficult classes to relieve anxiety and stress for Intern A. Following the development of the plan with the University Department Chair and the mentor, the three of us presented Intern A with the assistance plan in a private meeting on campus. We carefully reviewed all concerns, expectations, and dates to satisfy those with Intern A. Intern A was also asked to provide her feedback. Did she agree with all concerns? Did she need any further support we hadn’t mentioned? Did she understand the purpose for creating the plan and the potential penalty if she did not meet the expectations? Most importantly, did Intern A understand that we were all sitting around the table because we cared about her success in the program? Guiney (2018) supports our case for explicit procedures in the case of developing an assistance plan. She states,

In particularly difficult cases, including those with the potential to end in dismissal from an internship site or training program, having a third party present and carefully documenting the content and results of such meetings is extremely important for ensuring the supervisee’s right to due process and establishing that any major decisions were made carefully and thoughtfully. (p. 6)

### The Case of Intern B

The second case involved an intern who successfully completed his part time internship and his initial teaching opportunities. There were not red flags raised during intern B’s part time internship semester and he demonstrated the potential to succeed. His ability to develop strong student relationships and his confidence in the ability to be in front of students contributed to this success. During the initial weeks of his full time internship, concerns began to arise. Intern B’s plans were often not provided to his mentor in a timely manner leaving little or no time for needed revision. Plans were incomplete and implementation became weak with no clearly stated lesson purpose or student expectations. Activities were only loosely connected and intern B did not take time to complete worksheets resulting in confusion and both an insufficient understanding of the lesson content and poor anticipation of student responses and questions. As the semester progressed and the teaching load increased, this only became more evident. Multiple meetings between the intern, mentor, and university supervisor were held with significant written summaries with specific feedback and suggestions. Finally, following the start of his second eight week internship rotation, a decision was made to have the intern removed from his placement. This was the result of intern B’s failure to respond to suggestions and continuing to arrive at school with poorly completed plans. A meeting was held between the intern, university supervisor, university school liaison, and the secondary education department head. At this meeting it was decided that the intern would be given the opportunity to repeat his internship in the next semester. He was assigned to a mentor in a different school and county and provided a detailed assistance plan that highlighted areas of concern and specific areas that needed to be addressed. These included planning, content preparation, lesson delivery, ability to provide students with a clarity of lesson purpose, expectations, and directions.

At the start of the next semester the intern was provided a copy of the assistance plan. This was reviewed initially by the intern with his university supervisor. Prior to the start of the new internship, a meeting between the mentor, intern, and university supervisor was held to review the plan and set clear guidelines for addressing the areas of concern. Initially, intern B struggled. While lessons were provided in advance, they

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<th>Statement of Concerns: (Relate to Standards: TU Professional Behavior Policy, InTASC, and/or Program Standards)</th>
<th>The teacher candidate will: (include observable performance and timeline of dates to be accomplished)</th>
<th>Supervisor and/or mentor (note which) will provide the following supports:</th>
<th>Documentation of Progress (include dates)</th>
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**Figure 1:** An abbreviated and scaled down template of the assistance plan used in cases of interns a and b. Signatures and program information is omitted in this figure.
were often in need of revision leading to less than adequate preparation time. Following an early initial observation, this issue was discussed and a clear directive was provided relating to his ability to remain in the internship. At this point things began to change. His lessons were provided in a timely and more comprehensive manner. This allowed the mentor and supervisor the opportunity to help the intern make clear lesson connections and understand the importance of “working through” student work in advance. Lesson implementation improved and by the start of his second eight week rotation he had made progress in meeting the stated goals in the assistance plan. A meeting was held with his second rotation mentor and specific weekly goals were set. His abilities to relate to students and his confidence in delivering lessons showed marked improvement as his planning and preparation strengthened. The mentor and supervisor were able to focus on other facet of instructional practice such as clearly defined pacing of activities and using the lesson objective to connect each activity to one another and to the final assessment and learning goal. By the end of the semester intern B had met the expectations of the assistance plan and had increased his potential as a future teacher. All of this was the result of setting clearly established goals and expectations in an assistance plan and then triangulating the manner in which the plan was implemented and monitored.

Conclusion
Accountability and communication are at the heart of our assistance plan. This tool can and has been used for interns demonstrating concerns prior to their final internship; it helps interns reflect on their practices and professional behaviors, holds them accountable for growth, and promotes communication between all stakeholders involved. Partnerships are strengthened as a result of improving communication between stakeholders. Middleton, Abrams, & Seaman (2011) comment on the impact that reflective support systems like the assistance plan we created for struggling interns have on teachers beyond their internship year. They state that, “Implications for teacher education include the need to more closely guide and mentor new teachers into understanding how reflective practices extend beyond their teacher training program into their professional careers.” (p. 74). We hope that other universities might consider supporting their interns who present red flags with the same care and support as well as innovation and reflection that we have created for our interns.

It is important to conclude with the note that both interns A and B were hired as teachers in the semester following the completion of their internship and graduation. Each has met with success and have received satisfactory evaluations and positive administrative feedback during their first year of teaching.

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FitLit: How an Unlikely Combination of Fitness and Literacy Yielded a Fruitful Partnership

Jennifer Allen, Bethany Scullin, The University of West Georgia

Some things just naturally seem to go together, like peanut butter and jelly, cookies and milk, bread and butter. But what about the unlikely combinations that don’t seem to fit at first mention, but when they are combined actually create something even better? Consider chicken and waffles, for instance. Some people are drawn to try this seemingly odd combination because they like chicken; others try it because they like waffles; but perhaps many try it because they are curious to taste the two together and are delighted to discover that the resulting flavor of each is enhanced by the intentional pairing of the two. Thus, it stands to reason that sometimes unlikely pairings actually do yield productive results.

We discussed the idea of beginning an after-school literacy club with one of our PDS Partner schools, Sand Hill Elementary. We knew we would need a creative approach to pique the interest of even the most unlikely of literature lovers. We have worked with youth long enough to know that fifth graders don’t necessarily jump at the chance to join an after-school club focused on literacy. As luck would have it, Mrs. Rikki Chandler, a fifth grade teacher, had been contemplating starting a literacy club for the students at Sand Hill for some time because she believed that it would fill a void for the students. The school offered a running club, a STEM club, a Robotics club, and a broadcast club, to name a few. They even had a Reading Bowl team. But the club Mrs. Chandler envisioned would be different. It would focus on meaningful reading and writing experiences that helped students get to the heart of what literacy is all about – connecting to and learning from another’s stories.

Mrs. Chandler was definitely speaking our language. As literacy professors at the University of West Georgia, we bought in completely to the idea that students need a space outside of the classroom where they can have open and honest conversations about books and where they can write about their new ways of thinking and being in the world around them. But we also worried that the conversations about books and journals alone might not be enough to attract a following of fifth graders.

Our plan for drawing a varied group of participants was to add a twist to our literacy club. As people who enjoy regular exercise, we had read articles about the benefits of physical activity and how exercise primes the pump for learning (Active Living Research, 2015; Hall, Poston, & Harris, 2015; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and SHAPE America, 2017). We had seen posts scattered on social media about how we need to lengthen recess and play time for students (Pawloski, 2016; Ramstetter & Murray, 2017). We imagined that if we combined fitness and literacy, an unlikely, yet brilliant pairing, we could create a club that had its own unique flavor, where fitness and literacy could coexist and so could athletes, readers, and writers.

A Combination is Created

Mrs. Chandler, Dr. Scullin, and I put our heads together and drafted our ideas for our after-school club. We agreed that our ultimate goals for the club were to build a community of fitness enthusiasts, readers, and writers who would gain self-awareness and empathy and nudge one another to see the world from other people’s perspectives. In essence, we agreed to meet once a week after school and use carefully planned fitness and literacy experiences designed to invite students to “walk a mile in someone else’s shoes.” We wanted to use books as windows into reality where students could meet people whose life experiences are much different from their own.
Students were placed in third grade at Sand Hill, and they were seeking more experience working with older elementary students.

Once we knew that we had enough adult facilitators, Mrs. Chandler began recruiting students. She created an eye-catching flyer using our logo to advertise our club. She visited each fifth grade class and briefly explained the club and gave the students the flyers. Initially, we had approximately 13 students who returned the flyer to participate in FitLit. However, at the first session, we were discouraged when only 10 students attended. But, we encouraged the students to share our club with their friends and talk about how much fun they had at FitLit. The next week and in the weeks that followed, we had 19 total FitLit participants.

**Tasting the Combination**

Our framework for each FitLit session generally consisted of the same components each week. We began with the fitness and exercise segment because we wanted the students to be active prior to learning. The fitness segment generally lasted 20–25 minutes and included group activities and relays as well as individual events. We wanted to promote a strong sense of community through team-building, problem-solving, and communication, and we also encouraged students to set personal fitness goals and work toward achieving them. Following the fitness activities, we provided our participants with healthy snacks, such as trail mix, pretzels, apple slices, and bottled water. During this time, we recorded attendance and logged moves on our fitness trackers. Also, while the students enjoyed their snacks, students volunteered to share entries from their dialogue journals. This time was meaningful because students shared their entry from the previous week—an entry that related back to the book we were all reading—as well as their family member’s response. It was rewarding to see the students’ families investing in their students’ literacy practices.

From there we moved in to our reading segment. Together we read *A Long Walk to Water*, by Linda Sue Park (2010), using Audible to follow along with the story. We decided to use a read-aloud approach so that the text was accessible to all students, regardless of reading ability. To promote active reading and listening, we encouraged students to write in their copy of the text by marking important and meaningful passages, questions they may have, vocabulary they be confused by, powerful quotes, etc. We chose this window book (Bishop, 1990) specifically because we hoped it would offer students a concrete way to grasp the idea of multiple perspectives. *A Long Walk to Water* is written as a dual narrative, sharing alternating perspectives between an 11-year-old boy living in Sudan in 1985 and an 11-year-old girl living in Sudan in 2008. The story shares the struggles and triumphs of these two Sudanese children and their stories ultimately intersect in an unforeseen and astonishing way.

After listening to roughly three chapters of the book per session, we broke into small discussion groups of three to four students, each led by an adult facilitator. Dr. Scullin and I thoughtfully planned critical discussion questions for students to consider each week. These questions encouraged students to reflect on their own lives and examine the ways in which their lives contrasted those of the main characters in the book. Our goal was to help students gain a new understanding and appreciation for their daily lives and to consider how they might handle adversity when it comes their way. For instance, during one session, we discussed the following questions: 1.) How does our nation currently view refugees or immigrants? What are we possibly not considering as a nation when it comes to refugees and immigrants? 2.) Nya’s family is fearful of the Dinka. From Nya’s perspective, Salva’s people are “the enemy.” Knowing Salva’s story, is it hard for you to understand why Nya’s family fears Salva’s people? Explain.

Following our discussions, we provided students with an open-ended question to discuss in their dialogue journal. Each student wrote a letter to a family member sharing their thoughts about the discussion question. Our hope was that each student’s family member would write a letter back to respond. We did not get 100 percent participation from the family members with the journal writing, but when families did participate, the responses were always heartfelt and moving.

**A Flavorful Impact**

As educators, we never know what to expect when we pilot a new opportunity that involves a number of moving parts as well as a variety of students. Of course we were not surprised when the students who participated in FitLit started to meld into a supportive community of learners and citizens who began to think outside of their own needs and wants. It was, however, rewarding when Mrs. Meigs told us that students who had been regular “high flyers,” visiting her in her office quite frequently during the school days, had become more engaged learners as a result of their participation in FitLit. Perhaps most noteworthy, the students began thinking of ways they could reach beyond their school community to impact the world. They planned a variety show that included a variety of acts, including dance, comedy, and skits. The variety show raised funds for Water for South Sudan, a non-profit organization founded by Salva (one of the main characters in *A Long Walk to Water*) whose mission is to create access to safe drinking water for communities located in South Sudan (For more information about this organization, please visit www.waterforsouthsudan.org). While the Sand Hill fifth-grade teachers as well as the UWG PDS students assisted students with preparations for the variety show, the vast majority of the event was planned and carried out by the students. What started out as a goal to encourage self-awareness and empathy resulted in a community of students who became engaged activists, using their creativity, talent, and...
and compassion to create a better reality for others.

FitLit was a smashing success. As it turned out, the team effort between school-based educators at Sand Hill Elementary and teacher-educators at the University of West Georgia paved the way for a new and innovative PDS partnership involving an after-school club with a delightful and unique flavor. And we realized that sometimes partnerships that capitalize on the even the most unlikely of combinations bear unexpected, yet amazing benefits.

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Implementing Win-Win Math & Science Field Experiences

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“Real classrooms, with real children, in a real school” (Lucero, 2011, p. 41). Recent literature suggests future educators benefit from situated learning opportunities or field experiences in which they are immersed in the authentic learning environment on a regular basis during their teacher preparation program (Koc, 2012). However, depending upon the field experience placement, the learning that occurs can be either positively or negatively impactful. As Dewey describes in his book, Experience in Education (1938), educators have a responsibility to create conditions in the present experience that will have a favorable effect on the future (p. 50). Therefore, teacher preparation programs must attempt to find ways to structure field experiences that better prepare next generation teacher candidates for their future role in the classroom. As the National Research Council’s Framework for Understanding Teaching and Learning (2000) discusses, preparing teachers for a changing world requires educators to acquire: (a) knowledge of the subject matter; (b) knowledge of teaching or pedagogical content knowledge, and (c) knowledge of learners and their development (See Figure 1). These three factors directly align with the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation standards (CAEP, 2013).

As a result, the Teacher Education Department at a midsized university revisited their field experience programs, requirements, and assessment practices. The faculty made revisions and updates to support future educators’ development in these areas in an effort to better prepare candidates for their future role in the classroom. This article describes how two methods instructors within the department currently organize, facilitate, and assess their elementary science and math field experiences to better prepare next generation teacher candidates to meet the needs of diverse K-6 learners in their future classroom and school environment.

Problems with Previous Math and Science Field Experiences
In the past, individual teacher candidates were placed in an elementary classroom to complete between 25 and 50 hours of field experience over the course of the semester, whether for math or science. Unfortunately, due to schedule changes and curriculum mandates, many teacher candidates often had limited opportunities to observe or teach the subjects associated with the methods course they were enrolled in that semester (i.e., math or science).

Figure 1: Framework for How People Learn (NRC, 2000).
Furthermore, the majority of the time spent in classrooms was in observing or assisting the teacher rather than "experiencing" teaching or working with elementary students. In a best-case scenario, the teacher candidate taught one or two lessons during the 16-week semester that aligned with the content methods course of his field experience. However, even then, many teacher candidates were given less than 30 minutes to teach a lesson that was developed to span a full class period. As research shows, it takes time to teach concepts in an exploratory, in-depth manner for more internalized learning and application to other situations (Ma, 1999). As a result, the teacher candidates often shared feelings of discouragement. They voiced concern that time was not provided for them to finish or adjust the lesson to ensure the students developed an understanding of the concept since the classroom teacher already had her own lessons planned. The dissatisfaction didn't end there.

From the classroom teachers' perspectives, the lessons taught by the teacher candidates were sometimes viewed as “add-one” or “disruptions” that took time away from the elementary students' learning. As a result, it became increasingly difficult to find field experience placements for our teacher candidates. To address this concern, this unit decided to develop and put an organizational structure into place that would provide a forum for “ongoing governance, reflection, and collaboration” among participants (NAPDS, Essential #7). The coursework and field experiences for elementary education candidates were revised to reflect three common components that are strategically aligned with CAEP while also adhering to the Framework for Understanding Teaching and Learning (Bransford, Darling-Hammond, & LePage, 2005). The three common components include: (a) Co-Teaching Model; (b) Lesson Plan Template; and (c) Strategic Field Placements with Partner Schools (See Table 1 and Figure 2). A discussion of how these three components evolved within the elementary math and science methods courses and field experiences over the past several years follows.

Co-Teaching Model
In June of 2011, a faculty consensus was made to adopt a co-teaching model for the field experiences, strongly influenced by St. Cloud's Co-Teaching in Student Teaching model that would also be implemented as the capstone student teaching experience. As a result, our teacher candidates co-plan and co-teach with one or more of their peers during their math and science field experiences. In this way, candidates are able to share ideas for lessons and reflect upon what went well and what they could change for the next teaching experience.

For instance in math methods, teacher candidates are randomly paired and assigned to work first with primary-aged, followed with upper-level aged elementary pairs of children at one area school in close proximity to the university. Typically, this field experience occurs early in teacher candidates’ preparation. With this in mind, the field experience was closely aligned to methods coursework with many supports in place. The co-teaching involves preparing and practicing number sense math games using conceptually-based materials from EveryDay Counts Partner Games (2005). The materials delineate what the candidates are learning in methods class: opportunities for children to talk while learning math, strategies for formative assessment, ways to differentiate instruction among important standards-based mathematics content. The co-teaching structure allows for one teacher candidate to gather assessment data while the other candidate facilitates the game. Roles are switched when the group of children changes from young learners to older. After the co-teaching sessions, class time is allocated to allow for collaboration to make data-driven decisions for future partner games with the children.

Relatedly, for one science methods field experience, pairs of teacher candidates co-plan and co-teach a lesson related to reading nutritional labels to fourth-graders who travel to campus to participate in an Annual Fitness Day. The co-teachers share ideas and provide support for one another during the planning and teaching process. Initially, most of the pairs divide the lesson up evenly so they both have specific parts to teach using one of two co-teaching formats (Friend & Cook, 2004):

- **One Teach, One Assist.** One teacher candidate teaches while the other circulates and provides obnubilous assistance to students as needed.
- **Team-Teaching:** Both co-teachers deliver the same instruction at the same time, but each have specific ‘parts’ and ‘play’ off one another’s comments. Also referred to as “tag team teaching.”

However, as the teacher candidates co-teach the same lesson to six different groups of fourth-graders throughout the day, the teacher candidates soon realize that ‘time flies’ and they rethink how much time they spend on particular aspects of the lesson.

They also learn that each group responds differently to the lesson based upon factors including, but not limited to, interests, personalities, background knowledge, and readiness levels. At this point, collaboration and reflection become the keys to a successful learning experience for both the teacher candidate and fourth-graders. The pair of teacher candidates must work together to determine how to adjust the pacing, engagement level, instructional techniques, and/or level of scaffolding to meet the needs of their students and effectively meet the learning goals. To enhance the lesson for the next group of fourth-graders, the co-teacher candidates often reassign, revise, add, or remove “parts” of the lesson. On occasion, the co-teacher candidates decide to use more student-centered co-teaching formats such as parallel teaching or alternative teaching.

- **Parallel Teaching.** Co-teachers both teach the same information, but they divide the larger group into two smaller groups and teach simultaneously. This provides more supervision by the teacher and/or more opportunity for elementary students to respond. It also provides more time for each student candidate to individualize their experience for both teacher candidates.
- **Alternative Teaching:** If a student needs specialized attention, one of the co-teachers takes responsibility for the large group while the other works with one or a smaller group of fourth-grader(s).

The co-teaching model helps build content knowledge and self-efficacy of our teacher candidates prior to instructional experience. It also helps many of our candidates who transition to this model for their capstone Student Teaching experience. Another way to support and strengthen teacher candidates’ self-efficacy was to scaffold the lesson planning experience for the science and math teacher candidates.

Lesson Plan Template
In 2016, the Charlotte Danielson framework was adopted at this university. During the summer of 2016, time was devoted to the development of a new lesson planning template in an effort to align with the framework and the CAEP standards (2013). Many stakeholders collaborated to develop common language, common components, and assessment criteria for consistency across all programs. The three key areas of the lesson plan template include: (1) Setting and Assessing Student Learning Outcomes/ Knowledge of Resources; (2) Lesson Sequence and Delivery; and (3) The Post Lesson Reflection (See Figure 3).

For instance, when teacher candidates use this template to create lesson plans for their math methods teaching experiences, they are...
required to demonstrate their understanding and knowledge of “Setting and Assessing Student Learning Outcomes/Knowledge of Resources” by administering pre- and post-assessments related to the selected mathematics topic/skill. Several mock examples are completed together in class, including how to use assessment data to make decisions on grouping students. The teacher candidates analyze the pre-assessment data to determine the elementary students’ current level of understanding and to identify misconceptions about the topic/skill. To allow for collaboration and mutual investment in the learning process, the teacher candidates also conduct an interview with the classroom teacher to find out more about the elementary students’ background knowledge and experiences with the topic. This information is used to frame the instructional sequence of the lesson. Integrating authentic field assignments within a university classroom and field classroom, puts methods instructors in an advantageous position where they can assist in developing teacher candidates’ understanding (Cooper, 1996). Post-assessment data is also collected and analyzed to determine areas of growth for each student. Teacher candidates then share their reflection about the teaching experience in terms of student learning in the Post Lesson Reflection section of the lesson plan format. This recent emphasis on using assessment data formatively has been mutually beneficial to our shareholders in terms of learning for both teacher candidates and the K-5 students.

For the science methods lesson planning assignments, teacher candidates use the 5E Instructional Model (BSCS, 1989) for the Lesson Sequence and Delivery portion of the lesson plan template. The 5E model provides a framework to support teacher candidates as they plan and teach inquiry-based lessons in the elementary classroom. The 5E model includes five phases of the instructional cycle as shown in Figure 4. (Contant, Bass, & Carin, 2015, p. 105)

Engage is the first phase of the model. This phase parallels Madeline Hunter’s (1984) Lesson Plan Model’s anticipatory set in which students are “hooked” and prior knowledge is activated. The students then Explore the topic using hands-on investigation and/or research as the teacher candidate facilitates the learning process by asking questions and providing guidance as needed. During the Explain phase, the teacher candidate creates purposeful opportunities for students to make sense of their findings. They research, read, write, and learn vocabulary to help them construct a scientifically sound understanding of the topic. Once students have an understanding of the science concept, the teacher asks the students to apply and use their knowledge in a new situation. This is referred to as the Elaborate phase. Although listed as the final “E”, the Evaluation phase is embedded throughout the lesson plan not just at the end. Formal and informal assessments tools are used by the teacher candidate to gather data and inform instruction. The data is also used to differentiate instruction based upon their particular student(s) interest, readiness, and/or learning preferences (Tomlinson & Imbeau, 2010). As a result, the K-5 students also “won” because the teacher candidate purposefully prepared instruction to challenge their students within their Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) (Vygotsky, 1978).

After teaching the lesson(s), the math and science methods students similarly reflect and share insights about the successes of the lesson as well as set personal goals within the Post Lesson Reflection section of the lesson plan template. As shown in Figure 5, these reflections validate the learning that has occurred on both fronts. At the end of the semester, many teacher candidates shared that they felt more confident and comfortable about teaching science and inquiry-based instruction using the 5E model.

Strategic Science & Math Field Placements with Partner Schools

To gather feedback from our field experience classroom teachers, an informal survey was shared electronically. Having surveyed 29 math and science cooperating teachers in our partner schools, we learned that 76% rated the overall quality of our teacher education program as high quality and the remaining 24% rated it as good quality. Additionally, 83% of the cooperating teachers indicated that our teacher candidates are very well prepared to teach and 17% felt our teacher candidates were somewhat prepared. Through this survey, we found that since implementing our ‘Win-Win’ organizational structure for the math and science elementary methods courses in 2016, our partner school participants view of working with the university students is overwhelmingly positive. Several classroom teachers and administrators shared perceived benefits of their current role within the organizational arrangement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Functions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Engage</td>
<td>• Promote learners’ curiosity about and interest in the topic of study.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Involve learners with the expected learning outcomes of the lesson.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Elicit learners’ prior knowledge and understanding about the concept.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Make connections between past and present learning activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explore</td>
<td>• Provide learners with common experiences related to the topic of study.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Offer learners time to apply their current concepts and skills, try out ideas, address possibilities, and pose new questions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Allow learners to design and conduct preliminary investigations and collect data.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explain</td>
<td>• Focus learners’ attention on important aspects of their experiences in prior phases.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Provide opportunities for learners to share their findings from the exploration phase and discuss their developing understanding of the concept being studied.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Enable teachers to directly introduce a concept, process, or skill.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Guide learners to develop deeper understanding of concepts through strategic explanations by teachers or instructional materials.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elaborate</td>
<td>• Enable learners to apply their new learning through additional activities and/or use it to answer new questions or solve innovative problems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Challenge, deepen, broaden, and extend learners’ knowledge, conceptual understanding, and skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluate</td>
<td>• Encourage learners to self-assess their learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Provide opportunities for teachers to evaluate student progress toward achieving desired learning outcomes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3: Three key areas of the lesson plan template.

Figure 4: Phases of the 5E instructional model and their functions (BSCS 1989).
Consequently, it has become easier to secure "favorable" field placements with partner schools in which they are sure to observe and implement research-based math and science instruction. This is crucial since partner schools provide "a superb laboratory for education schools to experiment with the initiatives designed to improve student achievement" (Levine, 2006, p. 105). Therefore, finding quality partner schools and classroom teachers is another key to a ‘Win-Win’ learning environment. Teacher candidates are placed with classroom teachers who are open to collaborating and contributing to the learning of the elementary students and the future educators. For instance, in math methods, teacher candidates were assigned to teach in classrooms in which the teacher was willing to meet with and be interviewed by the teacher candidate regarding best practices in math education and classroom management suggestions. These classroom teachers were also willing to give both formal and informal feedback to the teacher candidates using a five-question likert scale form (See Figure 7). At the end of the semester, one soon-to-be Student Teacher wrote: "This semester I learned that (in order) to create an authentic math lesson, it takes a lot of time. This time is well spent when I get to see how the students connect to the tasks and learn the skills aligned to the standard(s)."

For another science methods field experience, the teacher candidates co-plan and co-teach 5E lessons to small groups of 3-6 fourth or fifth grade students at a low-SES partner school. This particular school was selected because the classroom teachers view the experience as mutually beneficial for all participants (CAEP standards, 2013). This is evidenced in their ongoing willingness to host Math and Science Methods students each semester. The teachers specifically stated that the elementary students received individualized attention and formed positive relationships with the teacher candidates over the 6-day experience. The classroom teachers also described how focused and engaged the elementary students were when working in small groups under the direction of a teacher candidate. From their perspective, the extra one-one-one support the elementary students received in small groups contributed to students’ learning.

As a result, the classroom teachers were also willing to invest time and energy into the teacher candidate’s learning as future educators. They agreed to meet with the teacher candidates at the beginning, middle, and end of the field experience. To facilitate this process, the
PDSs were designed to accomplish a four-fold
According to the National Association of
The Benefits of a PDS Partnership
Karen Frantz-Fry, Wilkes University
One University’s Path to a Professional Development School
References

Conclusion
Developing impactful field experiences is an important responsibility and time commitment for all stakeholders. Darling-Hammond (2006) suggested that Teacher Education programs organize and structure more authentic field experiences to enable teacher candidates to prepare for the challenges and diversity of current classrooms. Meaningful teacher education programs balance a clinical and a didactic curriculum, resulting in opportunities for candidates to put “analysis into action” (p. 308). These attempts are particularly productive because teacher candidates analyze, apply, and reflect in a purposeful manner that connects to both the subject matter and the elementary students (Ball & Bass, 2000; Bransford et al., 2005; Shulman, 1986). “In this way, prospective teachers learn the fine-grained stuff of practice in connection to the practical theories that will allow them to adapt their practice in a well-grounded, fashion, innovating and improvising to meet the specific classroom contexts they later encounter.” (Darling-Hammond, 2006, p. 308). As a result of the field experience renewal and collaboration, teacher candidates, classroom teachers, and teacher educators now frequently describe the elementary math and science field experiences as “Win-Win” opportunities.

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One University’s Path to a Professional Development School
Karen Frantz-Fry, Wilkes University

The Benefits of a PDS Partnership
According to the National Association of Professional Development Schools (2008), “PDSs were designed to accomplish a four-fold agenda: preparing future educators, providing current educators with ongoing professional development, encouraging joint school–university faculty investigation of education-related issues, and promoting the learning of P–12 students” (p.1). Learning to teach requires much more than coursework in a University classroom. Darling-Hammond (2006) reports that it is critical for teacher candidates to experience “extensive and intensely supervised clinical work—tightly integrated with course work—that allows candidates to learn from expert practice in schools that serve diverse students” (p. 307). One option for providing this experience is to establish Professional Development School Partnerships.
(PDS) between Universities and local School Districts. Research conducted by Baumgartner, Koerner, & Rust (2002), confirms the belief that teacher candidates who have the opportunity to combine fieldwork with what they are learning in courses gain a higher level of understanding of theory, and are more equipped to apply concepts and promote student learning. According to Standard 2 of the Council for Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP), “The provider ensures that effective partnerships and high-quality clinical practice are central to preparation so that candidates develop the knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions necessary to demonstrate positive impact on all P-12 students’ learning and development” (n.p.). This standard is the foundation for the development of the PDS partnerships described within this document.

As educational practices evolve, it is important for University instructors to keep abreast of the new developments and incorporate them into coursework. Is it equally important for teacher candidates to experience new strategies, approaches and curriculum in the field to enhance their own knowledge and professional skill. Collaboration between Universities and Schools is an effective path for developing partnerships to support the learning for teacher candidates. These partnerships provide opportunities for teacher candidates to work directly with teachers and their students. As scheduling ensued for the fall 2018 semester, additional conversation took place with the elementary school administrators. An agreement was reached that would resolve the scheduling issue. Now, teacher candidates register for the courses and the PDS component through the University registration process, so everything is organized from the start. Another benefit is that the School District will provide space for the professor to teach the course on site at the elementary school. Therefore, teacher candidates will spend five to eight hours each week in the school building transitioning between receiving instruction in the university course and gaining first-hand experience in elementary classrooms, working directly with teachers and their students. As the number of teacher candidates at the University grew, it became necessary to increase the PDS opportunity. Subsequently, the program is now expanding into a second elementary school within the School District and another professor will teach in that setting. The Superintendent of Schools has expressed interest in building the university partnership and conversation is in process to develop another PDS opportunity in one of the District’s high schools. A plan is in process for this expansion to take place during the spring 2019 semester and will be the first opportunity for secondary education teacher candidates to experience the professional development school partnership. During these experiences, teacher candidates learn strategies for classroom management, and teaching reading and math skills. They also share materials and ideas with the mentor teachers in this reciprocal partnership, so everyone benefits: Teacher candidates, mentor teachers and the students.

This partnership is growing not only in the number of teacher candidates participating, but also in the lessons and activities that teacher candidates develop and implement. Teacher candidates are now devoting five to eight hours each week in elementary classrooms for each of the three courses, with a plan to increase this direct involvement over time. Ultimately, the partnership may grow into a practicum, where teacher candidates are involved in a classroom under the direction of a mentor for a full semester prior to student teaching.

**Opportunity for Special Education Teacher Candidates**

This university also offers opportunity for students to obtain special education certification in addition to their Pre-K-4, Middle level, and Secondary level certification. To that end, another partnership has been established with a small, private school that serves children with high levels of need in exceptionality categories such as Autism Spectrum Disorders and Emotional Disturbance. Students from various regional school districts receive their education in this setting. As the population of students continued to grow, it became evident that the school needed to expand and provide secondary level education in addition to the elementary program that has been in place for several years. The University had a pre-established relationship with this school and teacher candidates gained the opportunity to teach the course each semester within the classrooms of the school. Initially, the school served students in kindergarten through sixth grade. As those students aged, and in order to accommodate a growing population of students with intensive needs, the school initiated an expansion project to accommodate students in grades 7-12, and the Director of Education reached out to the University professor for guidance in developing secondary transition services to comply with state and federal regulations.

**Legal Foundation for Secondary Transition**

The term “transition services” means a coordinated set of activities for a child with a disability that:

- Is designed to be within a results-oriented process, that is focused on improving the academic and functional achievement of the child with a disability to facilitate the child’s
movement from school to post-school activities, including postsecondary education; vocational education; integrated employment (including supported employment); continuing and adult education; adult services; independent living or community participation;
• Is based on the individual child’s needs, taking into account the child’s strengths, preferences, and interests; and
• Includes instruction, related services, community experiences, the development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives and, when appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation. [34 CFR 300.43 (a)] [20 U.S.C. 1401(34)].

The timing was right because the University professor was exploring a redesign of an upper level course in the Special Education sequence to have a stronger focus on secondary transition and was in the process of acquiring a textbook and materials to introduce to the teacher candidates taking the course. The Director of Education and the University professor worked during the summer of 2016 to create an opportunity for collaboration between teacher candidates and students and teachers at the private school. The Director of Education assumed the responsibility of preparing the classroom teachers and provided a list of competencies that were important for teacher candidates to demonstrate during their experience in the classrooms as noted below:

Objective: The purpose of this experience is to provide a background in career development and transition education from ages 14-21. Emphasis is placed on requirements for transition services, career development and transition processes, transition services assessment and development of an IEP that includes transition services.

• Write one measurable postsecondary goal and short term objective for each domain: employment, education/training, and independent living skills. Base each goal on the information from the student interest survey and vocational assessments. Each goal is a specific statement of what the student wants to achieve after high school. These goals should be based on the student’s interests, preferences, and strengths.
• Select and develop how instructional strategies and materials according to the characteristics and parental input of the student and use that information for consideration of student outcomes for each domain.
• Develop a transition grid within an IEP that aligns the student’s transition goals, objectives and outcomes to the outcome of the IEP.

These competencies were then shared with the classroom teachers at the school and the teacher candidates from the University.

Implementing the Program
Initial interaction occurred in the fall 2016 semester, with teacher candidates receiving instruction on campus for three credit hours each week. Teacher candidates studied, reviewed and rehearsed assessments, surveys, activities, etc. related to secondary transition in the sub-areas of post-secondary education and training, employment, and independent living. Each teacher candidate was assigned to one student within a classroom at the private school and worked between one and two hours per week assessing, directing and facilitating activities with the assigned student. Teacher candidates developed lessons and activities based on the results of assessments and interest surveys that were administrated to each student.

Feedback. At the end of the semester, teacher candidates provided the University professor anonymous feedback about the experience. Teacher candidates indicated that more time was desired with the students to engage in assessments and activities. The teacher candidates also reported that the structure of the program needed to be more consistent because the teachers at the school didn’t seem to be aware of the university students’ role. Teachers were focused solely on health and safety issues and that focus didn’t align with the university students’ broader scope of activities. The high school students therefore, had difficulty making connections and understanding the relevance of the activities. An additional concern was expressed regarding the design of the program. University students were assigned to one high school student with which to complete activities. Most classes consisted of eight students and therefore, several students from each class did not receive the benefit of interacting with the teacher candidates. When teacher candidates arrived to carry out their activities, they were directed to take their assigned student to another location, separate from the remainder of the class. Teacher candidates were required to share all materials and activities and a summary report with the University professor and the classroom teacher, but teachers did not incorporate any of this information into subsequent IEPs.

Moving Forward. Taking this feedback from teacher candidates into consideration, the University professor and the Director of Education met to improve the plan. First, training was developed for the classroom teachers and all assessment materials were shared so the classroom teachers would begin to use them on a consistent basis. Next, a more structured plan was developed for the next attempt to be implemented in the fall 2017 semester. For this experience, the teacher candidates were assigned in groups of two or three to specific classrooms to work with all students in the class. This system reduced the confusion for the high school students, classroom teachers and teacher candidates. A broader repertoire of surveys, assessments and activities had been acquired through the University and teacher candidates worked within their groups to assess, create and implement lessons and activities based on student needs. They also systematically collected data on the process and results. This information was then provided to the classroom teachers to be used during the development of the transition plan within each student’s IEP. Teacher candidate comments following this second year were much more positive. However, the concern about the limited time available and the requirement to schedule time on their own was a continuing concern. Teacher candidates were limited in their availability due to other coursework and obligations.

Continued Growth and Expansion. At the end of this second experience, the secondary population at the school had grown to a number than could no longer be accommodated in the building and students were added to a “waiting list” for admission to the school. The CEO of the school expanded and created a secondary school at another location in a neighboring community. With the addition of this new building, more space became available and the Director of Education approached the University professor with a proposal to provide a classroom at the site in which to provide instruction to the teacher candidates. This arrangement allows teacher candidates to work with the University professor and then go directly to classrooms to conduct activities. Teacher candidates will be able to implement assessments, lessons and activities in collaboration with classroom teachers within the time allotted for the course each week. In addition, this design eliminates the need for teacher candidates to arrange supplementary time within their schedules to travel to the site to work with the high school students as the time is now embedded into the course hours. Finally, the Director of Education and the University professor are in the process of developing a structured curriculum for students at each age level beginning at age 14 and continuing through age 21. Different assessments and activities will be identified through modules that will be the focus for each age range or ability level and will be concentrated in each of the three subcategories that are identified as essential components of the transition plan (Post-secondary education and training, Employment, and Independent
A glimpse of the future. As these initiatives continue to evolve, relationships will strengthen and additional opportunities within each PDS will be developed and expanded. The partnerships will continue to advance the PDS with a focus on meeting all nine of the essentials identified by the National Association for Professional Development Schools (NAPDS). Although a shared commitment to innovative and reflective practice (Essential 4), an articulation agreement developed by the respective participants delineating the roles and responsibilities of all involved (Essential 6), a structure that allows all participants a forum for ongoing governance, reflection, and collaboration (Essential 7) and work by college/university faculty and P–12 faculty in formal roles across institutional settings (Essential 8) were the primary areas given attention in the early evolution of the partnership, much work has yet to be completed. Moving forward, particular attention will be given to continuing the development of a school–university culture committed to the preparation of future educators that embraces their active engagement in the school community (Essential 2), work by college/university faculty and P–12 faculty in formal roles across institutional settings (Essential 8) and dedicated and shared resources and formal rewards and recognition structures (Essential 9). In addition, the partners will begin to engage in conversation to develop a written, comprehensive mission (Essential 1), common professional development opportunities (Essential 3), and engagement in and public sharing of the results of deliberate investigations of practice by respective participants. (NAPDS, 2008). While these partnerships are evolving and progressing, it is anticipated that eventually, they will become established professional development schools as defined by ??

References


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Walking it out: Using Learning Walks to Promote Dialogue, Reflection and Professional Growth

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Introduction

We want opportunities to observe a variety of teaching styles. We want to observe how other teachers, even teachers outside of our content areas, implement effective management strategies and/or differentiation strategies. We want to see various grouping styles in action and how teachers use the physical space of the classroom in innovative ways. We want to learn more about the teacher evaluation process and tools used for evaluation of Maryland teachers. This feedback was consistently heard from teacher candidates during and after their year-long internships. Loyola teacher candidates are provided with the opportunity for diverse experiences during field placements and internship placements throughout their residence in Loyola’s teacher education preparation program, however, it became clear that there was opportunity to create experiences to provide more intentional observations of best pedagogical practices in Loyola’s partnered schools.

In collaboration with the professional development school (PDS) site coordinator, school administration, Loyola faculty and other PDS stakeholders at one of Loyola’s Baltimore County partnerships, Overlea High School, it was determined that teacher candidates would participate in scheduled learning walks during their internship experience at Overlea High School. Overlea High School is located in East Baltimore County and is one of two high schools in the county designated as a PDS Learning Center. The PDS Learning Center is considered a model for best practices with a PDS partnership. The focus of the Overlea/Loyola PDS Learning Center is empowering student voice through the use of culturally relevant and equitable practices, as well as restorative practices. The Loyola/Overlea partnership truly demonstrates “a shared commitment to innovative and reflective
practice by all participants” through the PDS Learning Center model (NAPDS Nine Essentials, 2007). The concept of the learning walk as a PDS initiative was meant to provide each teacher candidate with focused observation experiences in many classrooms throughout the year. As part of the learning walk experience and post-walk meeting, candidates are able to reflect and debrief on best practices, ask questions about situations that they observed, and share real evidence of effective instructional strategies in action. Ultimately candidates are able to draw conclusions based on evidence and identify potential impact on student achievement.

The Structure of the Learning Walk
There was a joint effort between the Loyola PDS faculty member and the Overlea High site coordinator to create the structure of the learning walk. This process began with identifying needs of the teacher candidates. Based on both formal and informal needs assessments, learning walks were created to provide candidates with the opportunity to observe pedagogical practices in-action and to allow them to observe and reflect on variation in differentiation strategies, management styles and discussion techniques, to name a few.

Teacher candidates were also required to participate in a training session focusing on collecting data during the learning walk and documenting observations using scripting techniques. During the training session, candidates participated in a virtual learning walk with a video clip of a classroom teacher providing instruction to students, and were able to practice scripting techniques to collect observational data. Candidates were trained in how to interpret the observational data, identify trends and make a claim based upon evidence collected. Ultimately candidates are able to identify implications for impact on student achievement.

The structure of the learning walk includes a pre-walk meeting, classroom visits and a post-walk meeting. Each part of the learning walk is intentional and candidates are able to become familiar with identifying best practices aligned to the Charlotte Danielson Framework. Danielson’s “Framework for Teaching” has become the most widely used definition of teaching in the United States, and has been adopted as the single model, or one of several approved models, in over 20 states” (Charlotte Danielson’s Framework for Teaching, 2017). The participation in learning walks and the use of the Danielson Framework for identifying best practices provides teacher candidates with the ability to become familiar with the tool that will ultimately be used to evaluate them in throughout their teaching careers in Maryland schools.

The Pre-Walk Meeting
The pre-walk meeting serves the purpose of identifying the focus areas for observation and guiding questions to support the alignment to Charlotte Danielson’s FRAMEWORK FOR TEACHING.

- **DOMAIN 1: Planning and Preparation**
  - 1a. Demonstrating Knowledge of Content and Pondering:
    - Content knowledge
    - Ponderable relationships
    - Content pedagogy
  - 1b. Demonstrating Knowledge of Students:
    - Child development
    - Learning processes
    - Special needs
    - Student skills, knowledge, and proficiency
    - Interests and cultural heritage
  - 1c. Selecting Instructional Outcomes:
    - VIsual, auditory, and kinesthetic
    - Clarity
    - Suitability
    - Sequence and alignment

- **DOMAIN 2: Classroom Environment**
  - 2a. Creating an Environment of Respect and Respect:
    - Teacher interaction with students
    - Student interaction with students
  - 2b. Establishing a Culture for Learning:
    - Emotions of content
    - Expectations for learning and behavior
    - Student voice in work
  - 2c. Managing Classroom Procedures:
    - Instructional groups
    - Transitions
    - Integrating and applying new instructional styles
    - Suppression of volunteers and paraprofessionals
  - 2d. Managing Student Behavior:
    - Expectations
    - Response to misbehavior
  - 2e. Organizing Physical Space:
    - Safety and accessibility
    - Arrangement of furniture and resources

- **DOMAIN 3: Instruction**
  - 3a. Communicating with Students:
    - Directions and procedures
    - Expectations for group participation
    - Variety of verbal and written language
  - 3b. Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques:
    - Clarity of questioning
    - Discussion techniques
    - Student participation
  - 3c. Engaging Students in Learning:
    - Active and passive assignments
    - Group discussion
    - Integration of materials and resources
    - Structure and pacing
  - 3d. Using Assessment in Instruction:
    - Assessment criteria
    - Monitoring of student learning
  - 3e. Demonstrating Flexibility and Responsiveness:
    - Lesson adjustment
    - Readiness for students
    - Performance

Loyola teacher candidates, Loyola faculty and Baltimore County school representative engage in a pre-walk discussion with site coordinator, Scott Kolarides.

Loyola clinical faculty, Stacy Williams, and Loyola teacher candidate, Dahlia Wahba, engage in discussion following a classroom visit during a learning walk at Overlea High School.
the Danielson Framework. The walk facilitators (school-based faculty and higher-education faculty) gather with teacher candidates in order to set the norms for the learning walk, identify focus areas aligned to the Charlotte Danielson framework, and discuss potential best practices aligned to the Danielson focus areas that may be observed in the classrooms that candidates will visit.

Norms set for the learning walks include the following:

- Adhere to the focus of the learning walk
- State what you see through an objective lens and without judgement (use scripting procedures)
- Visit each assigned classroom for approximately 7-10 minutes
- Reflect on your own practice and engage with walk participants to reflect on observations
- Use the Claim, Evidence, Impact model (Saphier, 2014)
- Support teachers by leaving a note or sending an email to provide appreciation and/or ask a question to clarify observations.

Once the norms are set and the focus areas are established, candidates are provided with clipboards and notetaking organizers with the targeted focus areas, guiding questions, and the identified Danielson domain and elements within the domain to potentially observe in action.

Learning Walk: Classroom Visits
Teacher candidates are typically divided into groups of three to four candidates with one walk facilitator. The walk facilitator will time each visit and lead discussion in the hallway during the walk to the next classroom. Candidates are instructed to minimize disruption in the classroom, identify a space in the room to observe and script all observations in an objective manner. Classroom visits are kept to approximately seven to ten minutes and in a typical learning walk, three classrooms are visited. Conversation in the hallway between classroom visits allows candidates and walk facilitators to reflect immediately and record any additional notes to discuss in the post-walk meeting.

Creating a school culture that welcomes professional learning through the use of the learning walk is an important aspect to the success of this innovative practice. In this particular school, the site coordinator explained the benefits of the learning walk at a faculty meeting and allowed teachers to opt out of participating and allowing teacher candidates to visit. An overwhelming majority of teachers welcomed the idea of the learning walk and were eager to support teacher candidates with this innovative technique for professional learning.

The Post-Walk Meeting and Reflection
Following the classroom visits, all groups return to the same meeting room to debrief and reflect on observations. Quiet reflection time is provided to

Loyola clinical faculty and Loyola teacher candidates engage in brief reflection and documentation of observations in between classroom visits during a learning walk at Overlea High School.

Loyola teacher candidates and Loyola faculty engage in post-walk discussion following a learning walk at Overlea High School. Scott Kotarides, PDS site coordinator is seen here facilitating the discussion.
allow candidates to interpret observational data and evidence of the elements of the targeted Charlotte Danielson domains. Candidates are then able to use the Claim, Evidence, Impact model and identify trends/patterns based on the evidence and draw conclusions (Saphier, 2014). Candidates state a claim based on observed evidence and identify the impact on student achievement.

An example of Claim, Evidence, Impact:

**Claim:** The teacher has created “an environment of respect and rapport” as aligned to Danielson domain 2. (Charlotte Danielson’s Framework for Teaching, 2017).
**Evidence:** The teacher has students’ work posted on bulletin boards in the classroom. The teacher identifies students by name and provides verbal praise for student participation in lesson activities and class discussion. A smooth transition without disruption to cooperative learning groups was noted.
**Impact:** Due to the established environment of respect and rapport, students demonstrate engagement in discussion and the ability to feel comfortable to ask questions, share ideas and work collaboratively with their peers in cooperative learning group activities.

Each candidate is provided the ability to share out using the claim, evidence impact model and discussion follows with all group members. Frequently there are multiple different claims with supporting evidence aligned to elements of the Danielson framework. The discussions are rich and candidates are able to ask questions to identify potential factors leading to strategies chosen by the classroom teacher.

The post-walk meeting ends with each candidate writing a note or sending an email to each classroom teacher whom they observed to personally thank the teacher for the opportunity to visit during instruction, provide praise for best practices noted, and to ask clarifying questions. Teacher candidates may observe and discuss some less-than-effective strategies in use, however follow-up with the teacher on those observations is stated in the form of a question to clarify and gain information on potential contributing factors for the use of the strategies on that particular day.

**Learning Walk Feedback and Future Implications**

The innovative practice of the learning walk as a tool to promote dialogue, reflection and professional growth has been well-received by Loyola teacher candidates and school-based faculty. Due to the positive feedback, and even outside interest, learning walks have expanded to include Loyola School of Education faculty, school-based faculty in other Loyola partnered schools, as well as school-district representatives.

Feedback from teacher candidates included, “it was great to see differentiation strategies used in different grade levels. What works for ninth grade students (with management), may not work with twelfth grade students”. Another candidate stated, “it was great to see differentiation strategies used in different content areas. I was able to take some of these strategies back to my classroom and implement them”. Feedback from Loyola School of Education faculty included, “it was great to get out into classrooms and see the challenges that teachers are now facing, as well as effective use of current instructional practices”. Another Loyola faculty member stated, “the debriefing portion following the walk was extremely beneficial to be able to discuss observations with all group participants and identify implications on student achievement”.

Feedback from PDS site-based faculty included, “benefits of the learning walk model for teacher candidates are that the candidate can get out of their placements and see other teachers in the building. They are able to not only identify best practices by veteran teachers, but also observe more novice teachers and see some of the struggles and successes that they are having in their first years of their teaching careers.”

The learning walk initiative is still in its infancy state within the Loyola PDS partnerships. There are plans to provide candidates with more opportunities to participate in learning walks throughout their internship, even participating in learning walks in other schools outside of their internship placements. Discussion surrounding “mentor learning walks” has come out of Coordinating Council meetings and the potential to allow mentor teachers to participate in learning walks in other Loyola PDS sites to observe mentoring best practices and to allow mentors to reflect together and ultimately learn from each other.

**Final Thoughts**

The use of learning walks has expanded to other Loyola University professional development school partnerships as a tool for promoting professional growth with teacher candidates, school faculty and higher education faculty. There is truly a “shared commitment for innovative and reflective practice” within Loyola partnered schools (NAPDS Nine Essentials, 2007). As strategic planning continues with school-based PDS stakeholders and higher education faculty, there are implications to expand and grow this initiative to use learning walks as not only part of the teacher education program, but also to support new teacher induction and as a tool for professional development for veteran teachers and higher education faculty.

**References**


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