

Pre-K to 20 Integrated Partnerships: Research Brief and Innovative Models

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Introduction

The University of Alaska Strategic Pathways Review Team for Teacher Education is charged with reviewing teacher education programs at UA, “so that we focus our research and teaching on the unique strengths, capabilities, advantages and opportunities at each campus” (Johnsen, 2016a). Specifically, the group’s charge is to “Identify and assess pros and cons of most viable options to achieve goals including a single school, 2 schools or 3.” The stated goals are “to expand enrollment, reduce cost, and to maintain/improve quality” (Johnsen, 2016b). As part of this review, the review team is exploring possibilities for establishing integrated Pre-K to 20 partnerships with UA teacher education programs in order to contribute to the achievement of these goals. Although there are grant funded opportunities for innovation in this area, for the most part teacher education programs on the three campuses maintain traditional partnerships primarily to support student teachers and administrators during their internships, and to support currently practicing teachers for professional development and advanced degrees. This paper will review some of the current research on Professional Development Schools (PDS) also known as laboratory schools in some contexts. There will also be a brief discussion of other innovative models for partnerships and teacher preparation.

Context

There is a disparity between the achievement of minority and indigenous students and the general population throughout the United States (DeVoe & Darling-Churchill, 2008). Referred to as the “achievement gap” this disparity is documented through numerous national norm-referenced tests (Cohen, Garcia, Purdie-Vaughns, Apfel, & Brzustoski, 2009). The Educator Quality and Quantity Report conducted by the Citizens for the Advancement of Alaska’s Children (CEAAC) presented several findings regarding the preparation of Alaskan students. The report provides a recent snapshot on the academic achievement of Alaskan students: 1. Alaska’s Pre-K- 12 education system currently produces too many students unready for college or career. Only about 40% of Alaska’s high school graduates attended postsecondary institutions in 2012, compared to 68% nationally. 2. In 2013, half of first-time UA freshman required remedial courses. Of

that group, 81% required remedial math and 50% required remedial English. The problem of student achievement is exasperated by the high teacher turnover in Alaska. The CEACC report also found that although Alaska hires about 1,000 new teachers every year, less than 36% come from Alaska. In order to address this shortage, the state hires teachers from outside Alaska. “These teachers are twice as likely to leave in the first three years on the job, a critical period when teachers attain mastery” (Covey, et al., 2015). There are rural districts in Alaska that exceed a 50% turnover rate annually.

There are many reasons behind the achievement gap, including teacher turnover and the shortage of teachers in certain areas of certification. The intent of this paper is not to address these issues. Instead, the context of the achievement gap in Alaska schools, in combination with the high teacher turnover rate, provides a compelling context for change in teacher preparation at UA.

As a follow up to the initial Educator Quality and Quantity Report, CEAAC presented the Phase 2 Proposal (Wohlforth, Charles, 2015). Among six recommendations in the areas of educator preparation, recruitment, professional development and retention, the sixth recommendation pertains to the focus of this research. The proposal calls for further research in order to adjust educator preparation programs to improve preparation of teachers for the Alaskan context. Recommendation 6 states: “Establish laboratory schools in urban and rural hub communities.” Since lab schools, or professional development schools are one of the most enduring and prevalent models for university and Pre-K to 20 integrated partnerships, I thought we would use this forum as an opportunity to look at the research in this area.

Summary of Relevant Research

I’d like to use the analysis of evidence-based claims as a framework for summarizing research related to Professional Development Schools (Snow, 2015). In this paper prepared for the National Association of Professional Development Schools, Snow cites research supporting claims regarding PDS using the NAPDS Research Clearinghouse coding instrument to rate the strength of empirical evidence in the studies (NAPDS, 2014). The following table presents the seven claims analyzed in terms of the strength of the empirical evidence according the Empirical Evidence Strength Rating (EESR).

Evidence-based Claim	EESR High *	EESR Medium
1. PDS experiences encourage greater professional confidence in teaching candidates.	8	1
2. PDS experiences result in teaching candidates with more demonstrable teaching skills.	4	1
3. PDS experiences improve host teachers' perceptions of themselves as professionals.	3	5
4. Candidates with PDS experience are better teachers.	1	5
5. K-12 students demonstrate higher achievement through PDS experiences.	1	4
Emerging Claims		
6. PDS experiences encourage improved quality and/or frequency of formative assessment for teaching candidates	2	0
7. PDS experiences encourage improved quality of college/university courses (Snow, 2015)	1	0

* Number of studies cited

After looking at the coding instrument and reading several of the articles cited for the claims, I'm convinced that this is a valid analysis. It's interesting that four of the five evidence-based claims are related to teacher quality. To some degree these are common sense expectations for the results of a professional development school that demonstrates the nine principles espoused by NAPDS:

- a. A comprehensive mission that is broader in its outreach and scope than the mission of any partner and that furthers the education profession and its responsibility to advance equity within schools and, by potential extension, the broader community.
- b. A school–university culture committed to the preparation of future educators that embraces their active engagement in the school community.
- c. Ongoing and reciprocal professional development for all participants guided by need.
- d. A shared commitment to innovative and reflective practice by all participants.
- e. Engagement in and public sharing of the results of deliberate investigations of practice by respective participants.

- f. An articulation agreement developed by the respective participants delineating the roles and responsibilities of all involved.
- g. A structure that allows all participants a forum for ongoing governance, reflection, and collaboration.
- h. Work by college/university faculty and P–12 faculty in formal roles across institutional settings Dedicated and shared resources and formal rewards and recognition structures.

Assuming that this structure is in place as a foundation for the university/school district partnership, it follows that there would be evidence supporting the claims. I've selected two of the studies cited to summarize in support of this analysis, and to further illustrate how PDS function in public education.

Research Study 1. A comparison of the experiences of yearlong interns in a professional development school and one-semester student teachers in a non-PDS location, (Conaway & Mitchell, 2004).

This research was cited as strong evidence supporting the claim that PDS experiences encourage greater professional confidence in teaching candidates. This study follows 22 students participating in yearlong internships and 35 students in traditional one semester student teaching experiences. One of the key findings is related to decision-making. Yearlong interns reported “more independence and responsibility for making and implementing instructional decisions than one semester student teachers” (Conaway & Mitchell, 2004). There was a significant difference between the yearlong interns and the one semester student teachers in terms of their knowledge and confidence in classroom management. Yearlong interns working full time with experienced teachers also reported a higher frequency rate of conversations and feedback from mentor teachers and university supervisors.

Research Study 2. Do professional development schools (PDSs) make a difference? A comparative study of PDS and non-PDS teacher candidates. (Castle, Fox, & Souder, 2006)

This study compares pre-service teachers (PDS and non-PDS candidates) at the point of licensure. The study examined pre-service students from George Mason University that offers both a PDS program and a non-PDS program. Both programs are implemented through partnerships with schools in four districts. Admissions are the same for both programs and students are evaluated with the same instruments. Out of 46 items on the student teaching evaluation, two of these showed significant differences. The students participating in internships in PDS schools outperformed the students in the non-PDS schools in terms of planning and preparation, encouraging critical thinking and problem solving creating an orderly and supportive environment, demonstrating ability to manage two or more activities at the same time, handling disruptive or destructive behavior firmly and fairly. One of the reasons cited in the research is the fact that all seven PDS sites “shared common beliefs about the work of a PDS and felt that the schools, students and teacher candidates benefitted from the collaboration with the university.” (Castle et al., 2006)

In addition to the studies cited as evidence towards the claims, I’d like to present brief summaries of three additional studies in support of the concept. Full text articles are available in the Google Drive folder for Pre-K to 20 partnerships.

Research Study 1. Outsider Partners? Working with and within a Teacher Preparation Partnership in an Indigenous Rural Community, (Torrez & Krebs, 2015)

In this narrative paper, the authors describe their experience, and analyze a variety of data points in order to “better understand the tensions and intricacies we faced as outsider teacher educators in a partnership context,” (Torrez & Krebs, 2015) I think this study is particularly relevant considering the current structure of teacher education in Alaska, where there are few Alaska Native faculty, yet many of the communities we serve are Alaska Native. In terms of lessons learned and suggestions, the authors argue for the need for “connecting school culture, place, and values for a successful district” (Torrez & Krebs, 2015) This notion of place-based teacher preparation is also reflected in their suggestion that teacher education programs work to “grow their own” especially for communities with teaching shortages and high turnover. The goals of the Engaging

Teachers and Community (ETAC) partnership between a Native American Public School District and the University of New Mexico had five goals that relevant to the UA teacher education programs.

- a) Provide a social and cultural orientation for current and future teachers,
 - b) Reestablish a sense of empowerment among principals and teachers,
 - c) Facilitate collegial and collaborative work across the district,
 - d) Recruit current Indigenous students to become teachers, and to
 - e) Provide educational opportunities through scholarship dollars for teachers and future teachers to obtain graduate and undergraduate degrees.
- (Torrez & Krebs, 2015)

UA must support this type of research and apply it to our teacher preparation programs. Teacher preparation for rural, indigenous communities is complex and idiosyncratic. There can be no one size fits all approach to developing teachers for Alaska's diverse communities.

Research Study 2. Rethinking the Connections Between Campus Courses and Field Experiences in College- and University-Based Teacher Education, (Zeichner, 2010)

This article argues that the traditional university belief in the primacy of academic knowledge as an authoritative source (delivered through coursework) over other learning structures needs to shift in order to benefit from the knowledge of practitioners and community members. Zeichner cites the disconnect between “what our student teachers do in their school and community placements and the rest of their teacher education program” (Zeichner, 2010). There is a widely held view that field experiences are a place to demonstrate knowledge and skills gleaned from the coursework in the program, instead of viewing these experiences as clinical experiences where students are actively practicing and honing their craft. Zeichner cites the work of Linda Darling-Hammond, Marilyn Cochran-Smith and Peter Smagorinsky among others who have long argued for teacher preparation grounded in collaborative professional communities, with varied and extensive opportunities to teach, reflect and receive feedback. The instructional decision making employed by classroom teachers is key to their success. The only way to

develop the mindset of an effective teacher is to learn from learners and to reflect on that experience through action research.

If teachers investigate the effects of their teaching on students' learning, and if they study what others have learned, they come to understand teaching to be an inherently non-routine endeavor. They become sensitive to variation and more aware of what works for what purposes in what situations. Access to contingent knowledge allows them to become more thoughtful decision makers (Darling-Hammond, 2000).

Key to this argument is that universities and school districts collaborate to develop "third spaces" where university courses and classroom field experiences are enhanced by "hybrid spaces in pre-service teacher education programs that bring together school and university-based teacher educators and practitioner and academic knowledge in new ways to enhance learning" (Zeichner, 2010).

Research Study 3. Why Parents Choose Laboratory Schools for their Children, (Erickson, Gray, Wesley, & Dunagan, 2012)

This study presents a survey of parents whose children attend a laboratory school, as well as a survey of the literature regarding why parents choose lab schools. The most frequently cited reason was the "quality" of the schools that resulted in academic performance. A positive rapport between students and teachers, small school size and small class size were also cited. Many parents also expressed the desire that the lab school would instill an interest in post-secondary education and would better prepare their children for education beyond high school (Erickson et al., 2012)

Taken as a whole, this review of relevant research related to Professional Development Schools suggests that if UA pre-service teachers participated in a clinically based model of teacher preparation, they would leave our programs with greater confidence and as more qualified teachers, assessed through a variety of measures. The PDS model would also have a positive influence on the participating mentor teachers in the school, as well as the K-12 students attending the school. More importantly, a PDS would provide the "third space" that Zeichner describes for student teaching interns to learn alongside practicing teachers. Lastly, as we heard from Torez and Krebs, when

field experiences take place in indigenous communities, there is a greater opportunity for students to become culturally responsive teachers. And, if PDS schools were located in rural and urban Alaskan communities it would help to address the needs for both teacher recruitment and retention.

Pre-K to 20 Integrated Partnerships: Other Models

The following programs were referred to in some of the research cited above. Each maintains elements of the Professional Development School model. One of the key aspects for programs that feature year-long internships, is the financial burden placed on students when they are paying tuition while they are unable to maintain employment for income. Several of these programs have found ways to support interns financially during the year long experience.

Boston Teacher Residency, University of Massachusetts, Boston, Boston Public Schools

This program is a place-based teacher preparation program, designed to prepare teachers to teach in the specific context of urban schools in Boston. Students participate in a year-long internship where they work at several of Boston's most successful schools. Students spend one day each week in classes, and four days in the schools. Residents receive a stipend for living costs (\$11,100) and a \$10,000 loan to cover tuition. This place-based program is designed for Bostonians who intend to teach in Boston for their careers. They have seen an increase in retention for the teachers who have completed the program.

<http://www.edutopia.org/schools-of-education-boston>

Residency in Secondary Education (RiSE) California State University Chico, California School Districts

RiSE is a 12 to 18-month master's degree program with a full time, yearlong teacher residency leading to California teacher certification in mathematics, science, English or special education. Each student receives a living cost stipend of \$20-25,000 for the year. Students are only placed with outstanding mentor teachers.

<http://www.csuchico.edu/soe/rise/index.shtml>

Partners in Education (PIE), University of Colorado Boulder and Colorado school districts.

Since 1987, the Partners in Education (PIE) program has fostered collaboration between surrounding school districts (Boulder Valley, St. Vrain, and Brighton 27J) and the School of Education at the University of Colorado Boulder. "PIE Teachers," many of whom are CU-Boulder graduates, are novice teachers entering their first through third years of teaching. They obtain teaching positions in one of the partnership school districts and participate in a rigorous and personalized induction program, which includes starting a Master's degree program through the School of Education. Master teachers from the partner school districts, called "Clinical Professors," mentor PIE Teachers 1/2 day each week in their classrooms. In addition to regular coaching embedded in their daily practice, PIE teachers participate in seminars twice monthly which are designed by their Clinical Professors to address the essential question: How do master teachers think, act, learn and create? After their initial PIE year, PIE Teachers then complete their program coursework on campus. (Scott-Oliver, 2016)

<http://www.colorado.edu/education/pie>

New Teacher Preparation Partnership, New Visions for Public Schools, Hunter College and the New York Department of Education (PDS)

New Visions invites interested New York City middle and high schools to apply to participate in the New Teacher Preparation Partnership (NTPP), a new iteration of the proven Urban Teacher Residency (UTR) model, a school-based teacher preparation program run by New Visions for Public Schools and Hunter College since 2009. This new partnership program connects the preparation of aspiring teachers with the development of experienced teachers towards the goal of improving student learning. NTPP will utilize the structure of the Chancellor's Learning Partners Program to match host schools that have had several successful years in UTR with two partner schools that are less experienced or new to teacher residency work. Each host school supports two partner schools in the development and integration of promising structures, systems, and

strategies for preparing novice teachers and developing the coaching skills and instructional practices of experienced teachers.

<http://www.newvisions.org/pages/new-teacher-preparation-partnership>

Secondary Master of Arts Program, University of Alaska Southeast, Alaskan School Districts

Guided by an advisory program council consisting of Pre-K-12 teachers/alumni, administrators and representatives from the Alaska Dept. of Education and Early Development, this year long, cohort based model requires a full time, full year internship in Alaskan schools. During the summer prior to the internship, candidates participate in an intensive face-to-face session on the UAS campus. The internship culminates with an action research project conducted in the classroom in partnership with the mentor teacher.

<http://www.uas.alaska.edu/education/programs/mat-secondary.html>

Professional Development School, Penn State and the State College Area School District

This program requires students to spend the senior year of their undergraduate program in a full year internship. The PDS is an intensive field-based program where learning to teach is accomplished through teaming with a mentor teacher and a university-based educator.

<https://ed.psu.edu/news/news-apr-jun-2013/PDS>

Professional Development School (PDS) Consortium based at the State University of New York College at Buffalo (Buffalo State) and school districts located nationally and internationally.

The program groups student teachers in cohorts of four to seven candidates who move together through clinical settings, course work, and support discussions, all guided by a common supervisor who spends 2 days each week with them in the school building. Minigrants of \$2,000 fund action research in the partner schools to support best practice and address local challenges. An annual retreat and conference brings together the myriad partners in the network, which include other local colleges and organizations as well as

dozens of PDS sites and Buffalo State, and provides grantees an opportunity to share their research. The consortium is active in the National Association of Professional Development Schools and received that organization's 2011 Award for Exemplary PDS Achievement (McCabe, 2016).

<http://edprepmatters.net/2014/09/innovation-at-suny-buffalo-state-robust-pds-consortium/>

None of these examples provide a direct one-to-one correspondence towards meeting Alaska's needs for teacher preparation. However, they do provide important insights and strategies to help guide our work. For the work of the review team, it is my hope that this research will inform the principles and core beliefs that serve as the foundation to align teacher preparation programs.

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