



Theory into Practice: KSU PDS Model

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The 1983 publication of *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform* (National Commission of Excellence in Education) “initiated the longest sustained period of attention to public education in the nation’s history and ignited a new wave of interest in teacher preparation” (NRC, Committee on the Study of Teacher Preparation Programs in the United States, 2010). Numerous reports on teacher education were initiated in response (Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy, 1986; Holmes, 1990; Goodlad, 1990). According to the National Commission for Excellence in Teacher Education (1985), “...every part of a teacher’s education—from the liberal arts programs of the prospective teacher to the continuing education of the veteran—can be improved; even the best existing programs are not good enough.” (p 1). These reports set the context for the Kansas State University (KSU) Professional Development School (PDS) Partnership. This paper will explore the foundations of the KSU PDS model designed in response to this urgent cry for reform in teacher education.

Beliefs, Purpose, and Vision

In response to the calls for reform in K-12 education as well as teacher education, a small group of education faculty, science and mathematics content faculty at KSU, and K-6 teachers and administrators in local schools began to meet to discuss educational improvement strategies. One of the first steps in this process was to jointly compose statements of beliefs regarding the purpose of the partnership. To this end, all partners agreed that: (a) educators face significant challenges related to a wide array of social, economic, political, and educational factors; (b) complex problems require complex solutions; (c) schools cannot be expected to face these alone; (d) colleges of education cannot prepare teachers to face these challenges alone; and (g) genuine partnerships must be created where all can learn, improve, and grow together as a community of learners (Shroyer, Wright, & Ramey-Gassert, 1996; *Kansas State University Professional Development School Handbook*, 2014). These belief statements led to the creation of a community of learners for the continual development of the educational system and the PDS Partnership was begun. The initial PDS partners set out to involve students, parents, preservice and in-service teachers, administrators, school board members, university faculty,

human services personnel, and community representatives as educational stakeholders and members of the PDS community of learners. The expanded partnership members established the fundamental purpose of this partnership: to capitalize on the collaborative inclinations, experiences, and needs of the many educational partners in the community to demonstrate how to help students achieve high academic standards and enhance the quality of teaching as a profession at all levels of schooling (Shroyer, Wright, & Ramey-Gassert, 1996). The original vision of the KSU PDS Partnership was: to collaboratively restructure the College of Education's teacher preparation program while simultaneously reforming K-12 education for all students and educators (Shroyer, Wright, & Ramey-Gassert, 1996).

Premises

The next step for the PDS partners was to create a set of premises to guide the further development of the PDS partnership. The original partners felt strongly that PDSs must be based on collaborative relationships between content specialists, education specialists, practitioners, community members, and local and state agencies. All participants agreed that new partnerships were needed to improve teaching from kindergarten through college (Shroyer, 1991). The following premises were thus identified:

1. PDSs strengthen and integrate practical field experiences. They serve as sites to integrate theory from professional studies with practice in clinical settings where fieldwork is interspersed and aligned with course work. This allows novice teachers to construct a more holistic understanding of teaching within the naturally complex environment of the school.
2. PDSs are vehicles to extend the knowledge base in teacher education for collaborative inquiry into teaching and learning. Innovative practices and site-based action research should be incorporated as regular features of these schools.
3. PDSs are centers of learning communities. Professional development is a long-term, continuous process and should, therefore reflect the lifelong learning of educators. Rather than short-term skill building and one-day workshops, these schools help build a growth-oriented ecology.
4. PDSs play a critical role in the professionalization of teaching. For education to improve, a more professional vision of teaching must be created. Teachers, faculty, and students need to be involved in new roles and differentiated responsibilities. They need to be empowered to be an integral part of goal setting, problem solving, curriculum development, instructional improvement, student assessment, organizational decision-making, teacher preparation, and staff development programs (Shroyer, Wright, & Ramey-Gasset, 1996).

These foundational beliefs, purposes, vision, and premises represent the prevailing conversations in teacher education reform during the early 1990s and the literature that formed

conversations as the KSU PDS Partnership was formed and expanded to what is in place today.

Partners

The KSU PDS Partnership has evolved from a partnership with three elementary schools in 1989 to one with 14 elementary schools, five middle schools, two high schools, and two distant partner districts. Since the beginning of the partnership, the belief has been that the preparation of quality teachers and the reform of public schools are the joint responsibility of institutions of higher education and K-12 schools. KSU College of Education and College of Arts and Sciences worked collaboratively with Geary County School District, Manhattan-Ogden School District, and Riley County School District to design and structure the partnership, with each entity contributing its own perspective, expertise, and resources to make the partnership successful. This collaboration promotes the opportunity for quality preservice education, in-service professional development for K-16 educators, and the systemic reform of education within the College of Education and in each PDS. Collaboratively, these partners serve as co-planners, teachers, and evaluators of courses and field experiences, clinical instructors, and mentors of new teachers. Faculty from Kansas State University work with faculty from the Professional Development Schools on school improvement efforts, curriculum development, program evaluation, professional development activities, and action research studies within each PDS.

The PDS partner communities (Manhattan-Ogden, Junction City, Fort Riley, and Riley) also actively embrace this long-standing partnership. Organizations and businesses continue to support the efforts of the partnership by developing programs that connect to and build upon PDS work. Most recently, the College of Education established a working relationship with Fort Riley, a U.S. army base, to focus on meeting the educational needs of military families and students.

Partner Roles and Responsibilities

While the partners in the KSU PDS work collaboratively to maintain the partnership, there are individual roles for each partner. The day-to-day work of the partnership is

“*My collegial relationships allowed me to refine my teaching strategies, share new information, and celebrate successes...the training received in cooperative learning, learning styles, and action research provided me with a better understanding of students and how to motivate their learning.*”

– Fran Ireland

Retired Classroom Teacher and Original PDS
Planning Team Member, Manhattan-Ogden
School District

collaboratively completed by the PDS director, the Director of Field Experiences, College of Education faculty liaisons or supervisors assigned to each PDS, and teachers and administrators working within the PDSs. Each PDS identifies a teacher leader within the school to serve as a Clinical Instructor (CI). The role of CIs is critical to the success of the PDS Partnership; they are the faces of the partnership in each PDS school. In their roles they coordinate: (a) PDS activities and field experiences within their schools; (b) communication within and across the PDS schools; (c) simultaneous improvement efforts in their schools and across the partnership; and (d) PDS program evaluations. The CIs meet regularly with teachers and administrators in their building and with the PDS Director, the COE Director of Field Experiences, and representative COE faculty to oversee all PDS activities.

In addition, each PDS has one or more university faculty members (liaisons or supervisors) that work with the CIs, teacher candidates assigned to each PDS, and PDS teachers and administrators to assist with on-site seminars, supervision, and professional development. Ongoing communication is maintained between the PDS Director, the Director of Field Experiences, PDS teachers and administrators, as well as COE faculty and administrators.

COE faculty develop and teach the professional coursework and work with PDS clinical instructors and cooperating teachers to supervise field experiences associated with these courses. In addition, to collaboratively supervise and assess field experiences, PDS teachers have served as adjunct faculty over the years for key courses where their expertise was needed in areas such as technology, art, music, and physical education. The COE also has hired several retired cooperating teachers and clinical instructors as instructors and supervisors for key undergraduate methods courses.

The College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) also serves as a vital partner, collaborating with the COE and district faculty to offer on-going teacher professional development across the partnership. CAS also participates in action research and offers courses specifically developed for education majors. Among these courses are Literature for Children, Concepts of Physics, Math for Elementary Teachers, and Social Studies Colloquium.

Mission and Goals

Once the PDS Partnership was more firmly established, a mission statement and goals were identified. These mission and goal statements still guide PDS practices today. The mission of the KSU PDS Partnership, as adopted from NCATE PDS standards (2001), is to promote the intellectual engagement and development of all PDS participants. In doing so all partnering institutions share the responsibilities for the preparation of new teachers, the continuing professional development of all PDS participants, support for children's learning, and the use of practice-based inquiry to examine and improve practice. PDS goals and activities align with and support this mission statement, as demonstrated in the following sections.

The Preparation of New Teachers

Goals:

- to provide educators with the content and pedagogical knowledge, beliefs, skills, and behaviors necessary to provide all K-12 students with the knowledge and skills necessary to be contributing citizens in a changing society
- to prepare educators to implement what is known about developing and managing effective schools that support educational excellence and equity.

Teacher preparation is an extremely complex process that must be viewed as a continuum of career-long experiences that mold and shape the ever-changing behaviors of the classroom teacher. The PDS model facilitates systematic field experiences within such realistically complex environments, permitting partners to restructure teacher preparation based on this complex, holistic perspective as opposed to disjointed, incremental reform efforts (Shroyer, Wright, & Ramey-Gassert, 1996). To guide field experience expectations, performance-based, teacher-education standards were created and aligned with three sets of standards for teachers: *Program Standards for Teacher Preparation* (NCATE, 1998); *National Model Standards for Beginning Teachers* (Interstate New Teachers Assessment and Support Consortium, 1992), and *Standards for Professional Teachers* (National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, 1999). With the creation of these standards, courses in core academic areas and methods courses were examined and modified to align with the newly developed performance-based standards. In an effort to clarify and communicate expectations, Danielson's *Framework for Teaching* (Danielson, 2007) was adopted across the partnership to provide a common definition of the principles of quality teaching.

It was obvious to me that new students to the teaching profession could understand and accept effective teaching practices built upon the best research practices. It was Charlotte Danielson's Framework for Teaching model (that provided) the best understanding of how to ["grow as a teacher"].

– Diane DeNoon Hawk, Clinical Instructor, university faculty

In addition, a performance-based portfolio process was developed with assistance from clinical instructors, to assess students' attainment of the performance-based standards.

Continuing Professional Development

Goals:

- to provide professional development opportunities aligned with national and state standards
- to prepare educators to implement what is known about developing and managing effective schools that support educational excellence and equity.

In the PDS, preservice and in-service education are viewed as an inseparable continuum. Professional development opportunities offered within the PDS provide novice and experienced educators with the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and resources to empower them to create teaching and learning environments to meet the needs of an increasingly

diverse student population. Professional development opportunities are provided throughout the academic year as well as during summers. CIs from each PDS meet twice monthly with the university PDS Director and the Director of Field Experiences as part of the professional development provided during the academic year. CIs then assist with professional development in the PDS by conducting school-based student teaching seminars, cooperating teacher meetings, faculty meetings, and new teacher mentoring programs.

Summer Institutes also have been offered for more than 20 years to provide professional development through a variety of special projects that allow novice and experienced teachers to reflect on their teaching and learning with peers, administrators, and university faculty. These institutes have provided a wide range of professional development opportunities and content updates in mathematics, science, social studies, reading, and English. Additionally, C3 Academies (Children, Content, and Curriculum) that focus on specific content areas have been offered in conjunction with the summer institutes to allow PDS partners the opportunity to identify and target specific areas of need based on district and/or school data.

Summer institutes also were designed to address pedagogical knowledge, including topics such as standards-based teaching and conceptual understanding. This began with the examination of educational reform documents (e.g., American Council on Education, 1999; Darling Hammond, 1999; NCTAF, 1996, 1998; NRC, 2000; U.S. Department of Education, 1998, 1999, 2000) and the examination of content specific standards for teachers and students (e.g., IRA/NCTE, 1996; NCTM, 1999; NRC, 1996; NCSS, 1998). Other topics that were addressed during summer institutes included: literacy comprehension (Marzano, Seger, LaRock, & Barton, 2000; Tovani, 2001; Miller, 2002), Danielson's *Framework for Teaching* (Danielson, 2007), and *Instruction That Works* (Marzano, Pickering, & Pollock, 2001; Dean, Hubbell, Pitler, & Stone, 2012). To promote equity across the PDS, professional development focused on *differentiated instruction* (Tomlinson, 1999; Sprenger, 2003; Tomlinson, & McTighe, 2006; Wormeli, 2006, 2007), *Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol* (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short), *Teacher Expectations and Student Achievement* (Kerman, 1979), and *Gender/Ethnic Expectations and Student Achievement* (Grayson & Martin, 1990). Faculty in the College of Education also had the opportunity to participate in a book study, focusing on *Becoming Multicultural Educators* (Gay, 2003). Professional development supporting teachers as leaders also was addressed in the institutes, and participants focused on *Data-Based Decision Making* (Wellman & Lipton, 2004) (Bernhardt, 2004) and creating *Professional Learning Communities* (Eaker, DuFour, R., & DuFour, R. B., 2004). To improve professional practice and to work with their peers in improving professional practice, summer institute participants also explored *action research* (Altrichter, Posch, & Somekh, 1993; Hubbard & Power, 1993; Patterson, Santa, Short, & Smith, 1993; Holley, 2003).

The professional development I was provided through our Clinical Instructor meetings, Framework for Teaching Training and the Summer Institute, gave me the tools and peer support I needed to make a difference. I was able to go far beyond, "Well...try this; it worked for me," to a research-based living model of teacher development. We were able to share these practices in staff development at all levels.

– Catherine Hedge, Clinical Instructor, University Supervisor

Support of Children's Learning

Goals:

- To encourage educators to have high academic expectations for all students and to create and evaluate teaching and learning environments to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse student population.
- To enable teachers to develop challenging age appropriate and relevant K-12 curriculum; to appropriately use a variety of effective teaching strategies; and to use various forms of performance assessment to monitor and enhance student learning.

Professional Development Schools symbolize a commitment to improving career-long teacher preparation while improving K-12 instruction. The large numbers of KSU students and faculty working with each PDS provide extra resources, people, and support to help all children reach high levels of academic excellence. In addition, many enrichment activities have been provided to children and their parents through: family math and science programs; math, science, and technology afterschool clubs; summer magnet schools; and summer science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) camps and tutoring programs. Student teaching seminars, cooperating teacher meetings, and ongoing professional development activities provide opportunities for PDS participants to enhance their understanding of teaching and learning. Classroom innovations, collaborative action research and enrichment activities provide opportunities for student interns, teachers, and university faculty to implement, assess, and revise instructional practices to enhance children's learning. Additionally, book studies are used to provide information to improve K-12 instruction and address current educational issues identified by CIs in PDS schools. CIs are first introduced to the books and they work with student interns and cooperating and practicing teachers in their PDS to read and review the books and implement knowledge gained in their classroom to enhance children's learning. Recent books used in book studies include: *How People Learn* (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 1999), *How Students Learn* (Donovan & Bransford, 2005), *Creating Welcoming Schools* (Allen, 2007), *Motivating Students Who Don't Care* (Mendler, 2000), *Understanding Common Core State Standards* (Kendall, 2011), *Supporting Students from Military Families* (Astor, Jacobson, & Benbenishty, 2012), and *How the Brain Learns* (Sousa, 2011).

As an elementary teacher, I felt isolated and under-supported. I searched to find ways to be more effective and efficient while addressing key issues in my daily practice with limited resources and direction. The KSU Summer Magnet school project offered me a roadmap and compass to advance teaching and learning, not only in my classroom, but also to impact school and district performance results as well.

– Lisa Bietau, Clinical Instructor, university faculty

Practice Based Inquiry

Goal:

- to empower educators to analyze school data, create school-wide improvement plans based on identified areas of needs, conduct classroom-based research to determine the effectiveness of improvement plans, participate in decision making throughout the system, and become reflective practitioners.

Ultimately, the PDS should exemplify the most current and best practices education has to offer. Practice-based inquiry has included action research projects and classroom innovations. Collaborative inquiry has involved pilot testing and field testing new curricula, technology, innovative teaching methods, and assessment techniques. Early in the PDS Partnership, teachers worked on classroom innovations to improve teaching and learning in their schools and classrooms. As the PDS Partnership evolved, more teachers became interested in examining their teaching, and an action research course was developed and continues to be offered. As a result of this course, action research projects have been conducted every year for the past 15 years. Many of these research projects have been presented at state, regional, and national conferences.

As teachers began to examine their teaching through action research, student interns also started to think about how they could analyze their impact on student learning. Over the course of several semesters, students identified and examined one aspect of their teaching. The results of these preservice teacher action research studies were shared with their peers, and they were posted on the Kansas Coalition of Professional Development Schools (<http://kansaspds.soe.ku.edu>).

With the advent of student work samples, student interns moved from conducting action research projects to completing a performance-based teaching portfolio or “student work sample.” Kansas became one of the first states to require student interns to submit a developed, implemented, and assessed curriculum unit as a sample of their work before they could be licensed. This teaching portfolio or “student work sample” now requires each student intern to identify two K-12 students to focus on as they plan, teach, and assess a multi-week unit. The student interns are expected to identify the critical contextual factors impacting learning in the classroom and to determine the individual learning needs for each of their focus students. Interns are then expected to design and implement instructional accommodations based on these individualized learning needs. The interns conduct pre- and post-test assessments



The PDS community with which I worked motivated me to want to be an outstanding professor so I could influence future teachers who would in turn influence their own students.



– Dr. Marjorie Hancock

Professor Emeritus, College of Education,
Kansas State University

and analyze the K-12 students' work to determine if they have met the objectives of the unit. The interns then reflect on the impact of their planning and teaching and how their practice impacted the K-12 focus students' learning.

Practice-based inquiry is now evolving to include both clinical instructors and student interns working together to design action research projects. By using *How the Brain Learns* (Sousa, 2011) as a book study, PDS partner schools are being asked to identify a brain-based teaching strategy to use in their classrooms or schools and analyze the impact on student learning. This information will be shared across the partner schools.

In an effort to determine best practices and utilize up-to-date teaching, practice-based inquiry is an ongoing element in the KSU PDS partnership. The intention continues to be to explore how children learn, how teachers learn, and how schools improve.

Through the partnership I learned the value of action research and how to document the success or better meet the needs of my classes then, and now how to reflect on the success or weaknesses of my instructional decisions. I am grateful to (have) landed in the right place at the right time to have the opportunity to be part of such a powerful teaching and learning experience.

– Leslie Rader, Clinical Instructor, university faculty

Outcomes

The success of the Kansas State University PDS Partnership is first and foremost exemplified by the fact that it has thrived for 25 years. Over the course of those years it has taken all of the partners working together to examine and re-examine what is being done and what needs to be done to be sure that best practices in education are utilized to meet the needs of all learners and prepare quality teachers to work with the children in PDS partnership schools. Securing external funding has contributed greatly to the growth and continuation of the partnership (NCATE Project, NEA Research Project, DOE grants, math grants). These grants and projects have allowed the time and funding to include university faculty, community college faculty, teachers, and administrators in meaningful conversations about what needs to be done to prepare all educators to meet the educational needs of all children.

Examples of specific outcomes are provided below to align with each of the areas identified in the KSU PDS mission. Data were collected in a variety of ways including surveys, observational studies, district student test scores, College of Education PRAXIS program data, interviews, and PDS participant documentation logs.

Preparation of New Teachers

All preservice teachers in Kansas must successfully pass the Principles of Teaching and Learning (PLT) exam and academic content Praxis exam particular to their specific content areas to obtain a teaching license. In both the PLT and content Praxis exams, the pass rates indicate high standards and continuous improvement in the KSU teacher education program. The pass rate for all students on the PLT for 2012-2013 was 92% and the pass rate for all students on specific content Praxis exams was 97%.

On a PDS survey involving 170 PDS participants, respondents (administrators, student teachers, cooperating teachers and university faculty) indicated confidence (mean scores of 4.3-4.5 on a 5 point scale depending on participant category) that candidates have developed the skills and knowledge needed for success as beginning teachers as a result of their involvement in the PDS Partnership. In the same survey, administrators, cooperating teachers, and university faculty indicated (mean scores of 4-4.7 on a 5 point scale depending on participant category) they had noticed a positive change in the teacher preparation program as a result of the PDS Partnership.

In addition, the PDS Partnership developed a mentoring program that has been utilized across the partnership. Over the years, more than 500 teachers have been trained to mentor more than 1,200 new and beginning teachers. When surveyed, 88% of the new teachers agreed or strongly agreed they were confident in their teaching skills, and 89% agreed or strongly agreed they were prepared to remain in teaching.

Continuing Professional Development

Summer Institutes and professional development opportunities provided to teachers, university faculty, and district administrators had significant impacts on both competence and performance in improving best practices to meet the needs of all students. Based on pre-test/post-test data, C3 Academy participants had significant increases in content knowledge. Action plans, documentation logs, and observational data indicated that participants at all levels of the educational system implemented "effective and equitable teaching strategies" each year. Finally, survey data indicated participants felt competent to apply effective teaching, curriculum renewal, standards-based teaching, and diversity strategies in their own teaching at every level of education. In the PDS Survey, administrators, cooperating teachers, and university faculty agreed (mean scores of 4-4.7 on a 5 point scale depending on participant category) that the partnership helped them grow as a professional, and they noticed positive changes at their schools as a result of the PDS Partnership.

Support of Children's Learning

Evidence of student learning has been collected and analyzed each year since the partnership was created. Over the years, the data have indicated an increase in mean district scores in mathematics, science, and reading at all grade levels. Survey data also measured other indicators that contribute to the support of children's learning. These indicators were the opportunity to work with diverse students and the ability to be successful beginning teachers. In an analysis of 170 surveys, student teachers and university supervisors both "agreed" to "strongly agreed" that "candidates frequently work with diverse students as part of their teacher education program."

Practice-Based Inquiry

Examples of teacher innovations through the years include: developing non-routine mathematical problem solving curricula, thematic teaching, peer coaching, team teaching, multi-age classrooms, and alternative assessment strategies including authentic assessment, portfolios, non-graded report cards, and student-lead parent conferences. Teacher action research projects have examined student learning, effective instruction, teacher preparation, educational equity, parental attitudes, and school change. Specific topics have included:

- portfolio assessment in high school physics;
- teaching strategies to enhance achievement and to incorporate problem based learning into mathematics;
- improving school-wide programs for English language learners;
- paired reading as a strategy to enhance K-16 simultaneous improvement;
- paired reading, poetry recitation, and readers' theatre to improve reading fluency;
- early field experience students as mathematics tutors for special needs students; and
- the impact of professional development on equitable teaching behaviors of elementary teachers.

One action research project was incorporated into a year-long professional development program to enhance the mathematical achievement of elementary students. This project resulted in a National Award for Model Professional Development to Woodrow Wilson Elementary School (WestEd, 2000) for their "comprehensive efforts to increase teacher and student learning" (p. 4), and recognition in *Ideas that Work: Mathematics Professional Development* (ENC, ND). Student interns also have been involved in action research projects. One of these projects explored the use of paired teaching to promote cooperation and enhanced student learning.

Conclusion

As we celebrate the 25th anniversary of the KSU PDS, we can see the tremendous impact it has had on reforming education both in K-12 schools and in the university. Since its inception, the KSU PDS Partnership has focused on the preparation of all educators to meet the needs of all K-12 students. In doing so, PDS partners acknowledged that neither colleges of education nor K-12 schools could handle such a daunting challenge alone. The beliefs, purposes, and

premises that formed the theoretical foundation for the initial PDS Partnership and have been practiced for 25 years led to cooperative engagement in educational reform. The very practices that characterize the cooperation and engagement of the PDS professionals from all institutions set the stage for collaborative research, activities, and instruction where everyone participates, learns, and grows. This is especially fruitful and meaningful for the beneficiaries of educational reform, the K-12 students in these schools who mature into lifelong learners. The KSU PDS model is one that not only promotes educational change; it is a model that sustains ongoing educational reform in a changing world.



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