

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Building on the Momentum and Clarifying the Nature of Our Work Bruce E. Field, University of South Carolina

It's been five months since we all left Orlando at the conclusion of the 2005 annual conference. If you're anything like me, you've spent much of that time in a whirlwind of activity, some of it dictated by the everyday reality of life and work but some, I hope, inspired as well by your experiences at the conference. The conversations at the annual PDS National Conference never fail to impress me, and this past year was no exception. I was particularly energized by the enthusiasm shown for the launching of the National Association for Professional Development Schools and by the large number of participants who time and again asked, "What can I do to help move this initiative forward?" As a new academic year dawns, the members of the Executive Council will do our best to answer that question by getting in touch with those individuals who generously offered their assistance. If for some reason you don't hear from us, feel free to contact me directly either by phone (803.777.3029) or by e-mail (fieldb@gwm.sc.edu).

The NAPDS leadership met at the end of the Orlando conference and will be meeting again in mid-September. Our discussions have kept us on track in terms of planning for a refereed journal beginning in Fall 2006, and we have made progress, as well, on expanding our website. In addition, planning for the 2006 PDS National Conference has begun, and we will return to the Orlando Wyndham for our second consecutive year for a March 23-26 event; a Call for Proposals will be coming your way

shortly. Throughout all of our discussions, members of the Executive Council have realized how difficult it is to balance our "day jobs" with the work of the new NAPDS, but we are committed to the initiative and look forward to your assistance in advancing our work.

I personally have had the wonderful opportunity in recent months to talk with numerous individuals and groups across the nation about our new organization, and I have been impressed with their positive reactions. At the same time, however, I have come away from many of those conversations with the distinct impression that far too many educators and educational institutions misunderstand what it means to be in, from my perspective, a true "PDS" relationship. In some places, being a PDS seems to mean solely that a school agrees to work with practicum students, student teachers, or interns. In other locations, PDS work is entirely grant driven, meaning that someone finds a pot of money and figures out how universities and P-12 schools can collaboratively spend it over a limited period of time. Neither scenario exhibits either the purposefulness or the longevity which I believe are hallmarks of true PDS work. I hope that when we gather once again in Orlando we can focus our attention on this question – Just what does it mean to be a PDS? Until then, I wish all of you successful beginnings to your new school years and I thank you once again for your support. ■

INSIDE

- NOT ENOUGH TIME, NOT ENOUGH HANDS, PAGE 2
- PROFILES OF PDS PARTNERS, PAGE 3
- NAPDS BENEFACTORS, PAGE 4
- NAPDS BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND EXECUTIVE COUNCIL, PAGE 4



NAPDS President, Bruce Field, makes opening remarks at March conference in Orlando.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Oct. 27-30 National Network for Educational Renewal
Myrtle Beach, SC
Call 803-777-5991 or www.ed.sc.edu/nner/

Mar. 23-26 NAPDS Conference
Wyndham Orlando Resort
Orlando, FL

NAPDS Web site: napds.missouri.edu

Join the LISTSERV to interact with education professionals from across the globe. Ask questions and share resources!

NOT ENOUGH TIME, NOT ENOUGH HANDS...

For us it was a real dilemma! We have a state curriculum that calls for a tight teaching schedule in order to cover everything required, state tests in ELA and Math and an NCLB initiative to have all children reading on grade level by the end of third grade.

How could we possibly take on the extra work and time required to guide a “student teacher”? How could we provide the support required for student teachers to develop teaching skills, yet maintain the quality of instruction we strive for in our elementary classrooms? We feel that we have found the perfect solution...co-teaching!

Teachers at Parish Elementary School (upstate New York) have taken student teachers for many years, but when we became a Professional Development School in 1999, we soon realized that the traditional student teaching model was no longer effective in meeting our needs and provided very

little professional growth for the master teachers in our building. Because of this, we adopted a co-teaching model. In this comprehensive model, the master teacher and intern (student teacher) plan the lesson together, co-teach it, and reflect afterward on the effectiveness of the lesson and the learning that took place. Our students now have the benefit of two teachers sharing responsibility for their learning. Another advantage of this model has been that K-5 teachers have grown professionally through working closely with student teachers in exchanging ideas and engaging in reflective practice. We believe that when master teachers work closely with interns, helping them to become good teachers, it causes the master teacher to be a better teacher.

Although we are still gathering data, we believe that our co-teaching model is having a positive impact on student achievement. For the

2004-05 school year, Parish Elementary School’s standardized test scores on the New York State Elementary English Language Arts test increased significantly. Eighty-five percent (85%) of fourth grade students (up from a four-year average of 58%) scored at a performance level 3 or 4 (meeting or exceeding state standards) on the 2005 NYS ELA Assessment. Furthermore, Parish Elementary School had the highest ELA scores in our county. Co-teaching may not be the sole reason for our increase in ELA scores; however, we see a positive impact on our professional development, on the growth and development of our student teachers, and on student achievement in our K-5 classrooms. For us, co-teaching works! ■

Chris Weisenburger and Sue Fox, Parish Elementary School in Parish, N.Y. They are also Adjunct Instructors in Oswego State University.

“A child can never have too many mentors, too many counselors or too many people investing in his or her life.”

SIUE METROEAST P-16 PARTNERSHIP

The School of Education, in collaboration with the secondary content areas housed in the College of Arts and Sciences, is the teacher education unit at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville. The five major “programs” are elementary education, early childhood education, special education, physical education, and secondary education. The latter, of course, comprises more than a dozen content areas, some of which are 6-12 (e.g., chemistry, mathematics) and others that are P-12 (e.g., art, music). While various iterations of the gamut running from “traditional” program formats to a “professional development school” program format have been attempted, the last four years have seen all programs move to what SIUE refers to as the “partnership” program format.

Thus, we have come to use the term “partnerships” to communicate our relationships external to the university in lieu of any other term. We have opted to do so intentionally and for several reasons. First, in terms of what we are doing with schools and school districts, the term partnerships is inclusive of any format we use. We might be providing experiences ranging from clinical

observation sites through a formalized Professional Development School. So as we continue our efforts, the word partnership is broader and, perhaps, more descriptive for our needs as a teacher education unit. Second, partnerships allow us to include every program in the School of Education that is or might be engaged in relationships with external constituencies in business, industry, agencies, and clinics. In addition to teacher preparation programs, we also house such programs as exercise and wellness, psychology, and community health. Third, the word partnership implies associates who work cooperatively and/or collaboratively with others toward common goals... which is the essence of what we do!

All programs are now cohort-based, some with fall-only admission (e.g., elementary education) and others with fall and spring admission (e.g., special education). Of the five major programs, four are two-year partnership programs and one, secondary education, is a one year partnership program. All candidate placements are within 30 miles of the SIUE campus. Within this catchment area, we have the richness of diversity that allows

students to experience rural, metropolitan, and urban sites, as well as hard-to-staff urban and rural schools that are ethnically/racially and/or socioeconomically diverse.

The School of Education has reallocated funds for partnership supervision such that full-time supervisors are hired for each program. These individuals work with the program faculty to ensure that curricular integrity is being maintained. With the hiring of a new Director of University-School Partnerships, the supervisors will be provided ongoing development with regard to supervisory practices and other administrative pieces that are associated with these collaborative efforts. Among these are the assessments that are used unit-wide. While some faculty are provided differentiated assignments to spend time in partnership schools as well as partnership teachers serving as liaisons to the University, we are in the beginning stages of developing these links. ■

For additional information, please contact Curt Lox, Associate Dean (clox@siue.edu) or Elliott Lessen, Dean (elessen@siue.edu).

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BOOK REVIEW



Preparing Teachers for a Changing World

Edited by Linda Darling-Hammond and John Bransford, 2005

Based on rapid advances in what is known about how people learn and how to teach effectively, this important book examines the core concepts and central pedagogies that should be at the heart of any teacher education program. Stemming from the results of a commission sponsored by the National Academy of Education, *Preparing Teachers for a Changing World* recommends the creation of an informed teacher education curriculum with the common elements that represent state-of-the-art standards for the profession.

Written for educators in school systems, universities, staff development professionals, researchers, and educational policymakers, this

book addresses the key foundational knowledge for teaching and discusses how to implement that knowledge within the classroom. *Preparing Teachers for a Changing World* recommends that in addition to strong subject matter knowledge, all new teachers have a basic understanding of how people learn and develop, as well as how children acquire and use language, which is the currency of education. In addition, the book suggests that teaching professionals must be able to apply that knowledge in developing curriculum that attends to students' needs, the demands of the content, and the social purposes of education: in teaching specific subject matter to diverse students, in managing the classroom, assessing student performance, and using technology in the classroom.

There is a chapter about program design that features Professional Development Schools as a program that supports teacher learning and development. Ideally, the university program and the school develop a shared conception of good teaching that informs joint work. Studies have suggested that teachers who graduate from a PDS program feel more knowledgeable, prepared to teach, and have a sense of self-efficacy higher than graduates of traditional teacher preparation programs.

The ideas and suggestions outlined in this book have far-reaching implications for educational policy, classroom practice, and staff development and will go a long way toward informing the next generation of teachers. ■

MEMBERSHIP

We continue to welcome all of the NAPDS charter members, benefactors, and others who may read this newsletter. The Board of Directors and the Executive Council would like to encourage you to "spread the word" about our exciting new organization and to tell your colleagues to join you as members. In addition to our annual conference, we are currently offering a LISTSERV and newsletter with a journal in the future. Help us build a strong PDS Network across the P-16 continuum! ■



You can send your PDS news to Karen Schafer, Towson University, kschafer@towson.edu



Naturalistic Research – How One Partnership Is Doing It

The NAPDS constitution states that we value “a sincere partnership between the university and the P-12 school district.” Part of our mission is to . . . “circulate some of the best . . . naturalistic inquiry in the professional development schools . . .” The Department of Education at The University of Maryland, Baltimore County has been supporting this type of research in its Howard County, Maryland PDS schools since 1998. In the past, individual teachers have investigated topics related to their own classroom needs. UMBC has supported the research by offering an Action Research course at one of their four PDS sites in county, and it has awarded three graduate credits for the completion of the research and its presentation to school-wide faculty.

This past year, the course became yearlong - meeting twice a month from September through May. Also, the sixteen teachers involved completed a collaborative action research project based on Ruth Culham’s *6+1 Traits of Writing* (Scholastic, 2003). The group included teachers from grades 1-5 plus two Special Education teachers and an Art teacher. Each investigated the suggested methods of teaching and assessing student writing as it related to his/her students’ needs.

We began the course by reviewing student writing samples and by distributing a writing survey; we ended with the same two documents. At the end-of-the-year faculty presentation, we quoted some of the students who said, “I didn’t use to like writing, but now I do.” Some of the teacher participants noted, “I’ve seen much more improvement in my students’ writing this year than I ever have before. They actually get excited when I tell them to get out their 6+1 folder!,” and, “The difference in my students’ vocabulary is remarkable.”

Both of the schools involved in the 2004-05 research project will be implementing the 6+1 Writing Traits program school-wide for the ‘05-’06 academic year. Further, two other schools are seeking teachers to join the group that plans to continue their work from last year. I can’t wait to see what the teachers and students accomplish this year! Thanks to UMBC for being willing to try something new and for being a “sincere” partner in this naturalistic inquiry that will benefit their Interns and Howard County teachers and students. ■

**Cheri Jefferson, Howard County Public Schools
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A Model for Promoting Action Research at PDS sites

Buffalo State College Elementary Education and Reading PDS Consortium, a partnership of over 45 schools, actively promotes action research throughout the Consortium. The key to our success has been demystifying the action research process. Using Emily Calhoun’s definition of action research as “a fancy way of saying let’s study what’s happening at our school and decide how to make it a better place,” the Consortium has designed a standardized process that takes the fear out of conducting research.

The collaborative model pools the strengths of mentoring teachers, principals, college faculty, and teacher candidates to help meet the needs of the pre-k through 12th grade learners. All partner schools are encouraged to apply for mini-grants from the Center of Excellence in Urban and Rural Education at Buffalo State College to conduct action research on a topic of their choice based on school or classroom needs. In addition to funding, the Consortium provides college support in the form of faculty expertise for research design, graduate student assistance for data

analysis, and action research workshops for getting started. This fall, based on the request of our membership, partners who have successfully published their action research will present a workshop on sharing their results beyond the Consortium.

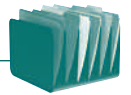
Once the action research is completed, partner schools use a formalized evaluation process to measure the effectiveness of their project. Graduate Students in Methods of Educational Research (EDU 689) assist partner schools in tabulating and analyzing the results of the evaluations. After the evaluation is completed, the action research projects are shared and celebrated at the annual PDS kick-off retreat. All action researchers participate in a poster session and then give a presentation highlighting their specific projects. Afterwards, the presentation and handouts are posted on the Buffalo State College PDS website for easy access by partners who may be interested in conducting a similar project. On an action research survey given to the entire Consortium, 70% of respondents indicated that they planned

on conducting an action research project after seeing the retreat presentations.

This Buffalo State College PDS action research model has been very successful. In a recent survey, 89% of our past action researchers responded that conducting action research through CEURE supported PDS mini-grants has encouraged them to conduct other action research in their classroom. One respondent wrote, “This experience took the fear out of action research. On completing this project, I was confident to participate in further research.” Another responded, “As more action research is conducted, our partners continue to improve teaching strategies and philosophies, and reflect on their practice for the benefit of the young learner. ■

For information and forms visit
<http://www.buffalostate.edu/pds/x503.xml>

**Jennifer Golias, Buffalo State College
Graduate Student
Leslie Day, PDS Director,
Buffalo State College PDS Consortium**



PDS Research: Developing Ownership and an Inquiry Culture

We all know that our partner schools offer wonderful places to conduct research but there are real challenges that many of us encounter when we try to realize the true *intent* of the standards in developing an inquiry environment that is supported by faculty in the school and college/university. At Edison in Port Chester, NY we are developing a more robust research agenda that will monitor our effectiveness as a PDS.

The recent presentation that our five-member PDS team made at the spring NPDS conference in Orlando represented the first authentic effort at our partnership site. This team would never have been supported to go to Florida unless there was buy-in from central office and personal commitment to take the time away from school.

We started our research by addressing real questions that came from the school. Our PDS Steering Committee, the decision-making body for the partnership, consists of the Principal, four teachers, the school Partnership Coordinator, and two college faculty, one of whom is the PDS Liaison. Upon reflecting on our journey, here are some of the critical actions that our PDS Steering Committee took to establish a successful framework for research and assessing our work.

- 1) We meet at least annually to evaluate our accomplishments for the year. These goals are framed around the PDS standards and are integrated into Edison's School Improvement Plan. In addition, we meet once a month for two hours to address ongoing partnership coordination and to review the progress of the partnership goals.
- 2) Last year we targeted the whole assessment standard as an area that was undeveloped in our PDS so we set about developing a research plan. We talked about the importance of conducting research that would answer questions that faculty had about the value of specific partnership efforts. One of the teachers in our Steering Committee started the ball rolling by posing questions about the impact of mentoring in the school which led us to discuss the need for a mentoring program for novice teachers. We decided that we should develop a pilot teacher

induction program that would provide multi-faceted support to three novice teachers in the school in order to enhance their overall instructional effectiveness.

- 3) With a general focus established, we set about developing a purposeful plan. We began to develop our project questions. What did we want to know and accomplish as a result of this pilot project?
- 4) Six teachers were involved in the project were fully aware that they were participating in a research effort. They were cooperative in completing all of the required documentation and seemed to be energized by their work together.
- 5) In the fall, the preliminary findings were brought back to the PDS Steering Committee for further discussion and action. These findings helped the team make immediate changes in the induction program as we embarked on another year.
- 6) We met with the Assistant Superintendent to review our findings and to solicit support for a team presentation at the NPDS conference. We talked about how we could contribute to district mentoring efforts which were now being mandated by the New York State Education Department.
- 7) We obtained the financial support from the school district to send the team and that team presentation experience infused new energy into our work at the school.
- 8) Now we are proceeding to tackle more challenging domains. At our recent annual retreat in June, we knew we had to build on our present research and assessment efforts and start to tackle the potential impact that PDS initiatives are having on student achievement. The conversation and questions moved to another level, with the teachers being equally strong contributors. We targeted several partnership programs and means to collect data. A literary specialist's responsibilities include coordinating the planning between the teacher and the college tutors and collecting various student achievement data to document progress.

If all goes well, this coming year teachers will be more involved in the actual data analysis and they will contribute to future professional presentations and writing. The data will in turn inform future work and provide more objective means to monitor progress. We are also trying to look at data analysis in a creative way, knowing that it can be very time consuming. In the fall, it is possible to take some of the data sets and incorporate the data analysis into one of the Leadership preparation courses that focuses on making data-driven decision making. We know we are on the right path, even though the footing is uneven. Our course of action is not scripted but it feels authentic and our planning process remains collaborative. While far from perfect, the conditions have been set for making data-based decisions and validating the work we do as a partnership. Time is always a factor that impedes our momentum, but as we look at each others' resources, we realize there are more solutions that have not been tapped. ■

Key Insights

- Start with teachers' questions
- Build a manageable research and assessment plan and a reasonable time frame
- Obtain leadership support
- Keep all key PDS constituents informed
- Provide meaningful roles for teachers
- Recognize accomplishments
- Involve school-college faculty in scholarly presentations and writing
- Create the conditions where wanting to know about our effectiveness becomes an important quest.
- Quest

Kathy Rockwood & JoAnne Ferrara,
Manhattanville College