Impact of Professional Development School

Michael A. Smith
University of Wisconsin-Platteville

Approved: David Braun y Harycki Committee Chair	Date: May 6, 2009
Approved: Bill McBeth Committee Member	Date: May 6, 2009
Approved: Dan Leitch Committee Member	Date: May 6, 2009

Impact of Professional Development School

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Michael A. Smith

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Michael A. Smith
University of Wisconsin-Platteville

Approved: _____ Date: _____
Committee Chair

Approved: _____ Date: _____
Committee Member

Approved: _____ Date: _____
Committee Member

Acknowledgements

My experience with the Professional Development School has shown me that effective teachers come in all shapes and sizes and that the educational world is an ever changing field filled with scary and wonderful things all at the same time; but what should never change is the focus on helping students become critical thinkers and more informed, compassionate citizens of the world.

I don't believe the Professional Development School would have been possible without the guidance and leadership of Michael Anderson. His passion and commitment in helping students is beyond measure. Bill McBeth, Dave Braun y Harycki, and Leigh Monhardt were instrumental in helping the Professional Development School succeed, and their vision for education is an example from which all involved become better educators and better human beings.

Thanks to my mom and dad for providing me with a wonderful childhood. Thanks to the beauty in nature, especially the trees, the prairies, the birds, the rivers, the butterflies, and all the other wonders that continue to inspire me; even when there is so much of the world suffering, nature helps me through.

Thanks to all the people in my life who are truly spiritual, kind, compassionate, and solid human beings that care about all living things on Earth.

And to my partner and spouse, Julie, who is the greatest I could have ever found. Her intelligence and passion and creativeness inspire me to be a better person. She fills my life with immeasurable joy and meaning.

ABSTRACT

Statement of the Problem

During the fall of 2008, the University of Wisconsin-Platteville's (UW-P) administration and middle-level faculty decided to engage in a Professional Development School (PDS) pilot program. The statement of the problem is to ascertain this pilot PDS program's pedagogical impacts through relationships developed between UW-P pre-service teachers, Iowa-Grant Middle School faculty, and UW-P professors. The purpose of this study is to explore the impact of the decision to begin a Professional Development School. While this study will address the pedagogical impact on teachers and professors, the primary population studied will be on pre-service PDS students in the middle-level program. A central question is how the PDS program affected their progression as future educators. The research is designed to assist UW-P's School of Education faculty and administration to understand the pedagogical impact of their decision.

Methods and Procedures

The author's involvement started in August 2007, when the pilot program began for the Professional Development School. Director of the School of Education at that time, Michael Anderson, stated a need to understand the PDS's programmatic impact. As a graduate student, I attended the PDS two full-days weekly, occasionally more frequently. I chose to approach the research using a case study. The case-study approach allows the researcher to explore a program in depth, over a determined period of time, using varied data-gathering procedures (Creswell, 2003).

During the fall semester of 2007, I began the case study by personally observing the PDS participants—PDS students, early-adolescent students, Iowa-Grant teachers and university professors. While at the PDS, I gathered information through regular observations and the creation of field notes. Twice during the semester, I assigned PDS students to write reflective papers. They described their experiences at the PDS. At the end each semester, I interviewed faculty at Iowa-Grant Middle School (IGMS) and transcribed their comments. For those not interviewed, I left a questionnaire to be answered voluntarily. Finally, I queried the professors involved in the PDS. Information was gathered over two full semesters. When starting the second PDS semester in the fall of 2008, I repeated the processes previously mentioned for the 2007 PDS participants.

I began to gather formal data after I received permission to engage in the research from UW-P's Institutional Review Board. Through the process of gathering information from multiple sources—27 PDS candidates and seven IGMS faculty, plus field notes and conversations with three UW-P professors—I have documented reasons that reflect the possible impact on not just UW-P pre-service students, but the possible impact on the school atmosphere in general with nearly all populations involved. Iowa-Grant students were not formally engaged in the case study.

Summary of Results

The PDS students consistently referred to the PDS semester as a preferred approach of teacher preparation. They commented that the PDS prepared them for student teaching and provided chances for guided practice in a classroom. It appeared that without the authentic middle-school setting, the pedagogical benefits diminished.

Through the placement of PDS students in an authentic middle-school setting additional pedagogical benefits flourished. There were four major pedagogical benefits:

(1) Relationships developed,

(2) Immersion in an authentic middle-school setting,

(3) Exposure to authentic teaching, and

(4) Preparation for student teaching.

These four pedagogical benefits originate from PDS students. However, I believe they are interchangeable with other populations involved with the PDS. The beneficial relationships include PDS students with early-adolescent students, PDS students with middle-school teachers and administrators, and PDS students with university professors. These are reciprocal relationships. For example, while PDS students benefited from interacting with early-adolescent students, the early-adolescent students benefited from interacting with PDS students.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

The Professional Development School (PDS) program was created when the University of Wisconsin-Platteville (UW-P) administration and faculty met with the Iowa-Grant Middle School (IGMS) administration and faculty to discuss the formation of a PDS during the fall of 2007. Professional Development Schools "are innovative institutions formed through partnerships between professional education programs and P-12 schools" (NCATE, 2007, p. 1). A programmatic mission of a PDS is to prepare students for professional service. This mission is not simply focused on the professional preparation of PDS students, but it also involves faculty development both at the university and the cooperating school, and increased student learning. PDS programs focus on the improvement of the practice of education, with their goal to enhance student learning (NCATE, 2007).

Statement of Problem

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Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to explore the impact of the decision to begin a Professional Development School. While this study will address the pedagogical impact

on teachers and professors, the primary population studied will be on pre-service PDS students in the middle-level program. A central question is how the PDS program affected their progression as future educators. The research is designed to assist UW-P's School of Education faculty and administration to understand the pedagogical impact of their decision.

Significance of Study

The significance of the study is to better understand the pedagogical impact of the Professional Development School (PDS) program on PDS students, University of Wisconsin-Platteville (UW-P) professors and Iowa-Grant Middle School (IGMS) teachers. The information gained through this study will bring greater awareness to the UW-P educational community and the IGMS community as to how their PDS developed and how it affected their youth. Recommendations will be provided to the UW-P School of Education faculty and administration as to what PDS programmatic research needs to be addressed more fully. The study will add to the literature on PDS programs, especially in areas where information is lacking, such as comments from principals and teachers. The study will also provide other PDS researchers a review of literature and methods used in a case study to better research their own PDS programs.

Assumptions and Delimitations of Study

- In this study, only participants age eighteen years or older are included in the data-collection process.

- Early-adolescent students attending IGMS who interacted with UW-P PDS students and other PDS participants are referenced informally.
- Research primarily was focused on the impact of PDS students regarding their learning and preparation for entering the teaching profession.
- As the author of this study was a participant in the PDS program, there may be inherent biases in the study (Creswell, 2003).
- As the author of this study was a participant in the PDS program, there may be qualitative insights based on the researcher's experiences and schema in the study (Creswell, 2003).
- A case study cannot be replicated or applied generally or specifically to any other PDS experience (Creswell, 2003).
- Since this study's duration was a two-year program of research, the pedagogical impact on early-adolescent student learning, either academically or affectively, has not been addressed.
- An assumption is that guided practice will help early teachers to improve their techniques and educational reasoning.

Methodology

The author's involvement started in August 2007, when the pilot program began for the Professional Development School. Director of the School of Education at that time, Michael Anderson, stated a need to understand the PDS's programmatic impact. As a graduate student, I attended the PDS two full-days weekly, occasionally more frequently. I chose to approach the research using a case study. The case-study approach

allows the researcher to explore a program in depth, over a determined period of time, using varied data-gathering procedures (Creswell, 2003).

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While the study started with a focus on pre-service middle-level UW-P students, I soon discovered that the scope would have to broaden. PDS programs are partnerships that are focused on student learning. So, as I witnessed the pedagogical benefits for PDS students, I gained insight into how the PDS program affected others: professors, middle-school faculty and the general learning community. While the primary focus remains on middle-level PDS students, research on the affect of others is included.

At the end each semester, I interviewed faculty at Iowa-Grant Middle School (IGMS) and transcribed their comments. For those not interviewed, I left a questionnaire to be answered voluntarily. Finally, I queried professors involved in the PDS. Information was gathered over two full semesters. When starting the second PDS semester in the fall of 2008, I repeated the processes mentioned above for the new PDS participants.

I began to gather formal data after I received permission to engage in the research from UW-P's Institutional Review Board. Through the process of gathering information from multiple sources—27 PDS candidates and seven IGMS faculty, plus field notes and conversations with three UW-P professors—I have documented reasons that reflect the

possible impact on not just UW-P pre-service students, but the possible impact on the school environment in general with nearly all populations involved. Iowa-Grant students were not formally engaged in the case study.

The data is reported mostly through categories of emphasis in relation to input from surveys, reflections, and questionnaires. Information on the analyzing of data, through Coding and Triangulation will be discussed in Chapter Three.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Professional Development School History

Under the cloak of laboratory schools, the idea of Professional Development Schools (PDS) has existed since the late nineteenth century. Woloszky and Davis (1993) described these early PDS prototypes as school settings that focused on the professional development of future teachers and for development of pedagogy. Laboratory schools within schools of education were the earliest forms of Professional Development Schools. John Dewey compared teachers' professional development labs to those of science or medical practitioners (Woloszky & Davis, 1993).

Modern professional development school programs may have developed because the increase in the political awareness at the state of our educational system. The first U.S. Secretary of Education, T.H. Bell, created the National Commission on Excellence in Education on August 26, 1981. The commissioners examined the quality of education in the United States and reported their findings. In April 1983, *A Nation at Risk* was released. The commissioners stated that significant reform was needed in public education (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983).

One of the *A Nation at Risk* findings was the need for raising standards for teachers and enhancing their educational preparation (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). Subsequently, researchers from the Carnegie Foundation and The Holmes Group responded to the information presented in the *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform* (DIANE, 1994). Recently, two

major organizations have immerged to focus on PDS programs: the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) and the National Association for Professional Development Schools (NAPDS). According to NAPDS, the term PDS became a major part of the educational conversation in the mid 1980's. This was in part due to the work of the Holmes Partnership and the National Network for Educational Renewal (NAPDS, 2008).

According to *The Holmes Partnership* website, The Holmes Group is named after Henry Wyman Holmes who was the Dean of the Harvard Graduate School of Education in the 1920's. Henry Holmes understood that the training of teachers was a significant part of shaping a nation. He urged educational and political leaders to change the structure that produced poorly trained, under paid and under valued teachers. Although he failed to make teaching more professional, his efforts began a movement that is once again relevant and at the forefront of the educational discussion today—teacher preparation and educational quality (Holmes Partnership, 2008).

In 1986, nearly sixty years later, The Holmes Group, which would later become The Holmes Partnership, was started and created a consortium of 96 research universities with educational programs. It began in response to three trends stated in the *A Nation at Risk* report:

1) Many of the nation's strongest universities were eliminating their schools of education to strengthen their other professional schools,

2) These same universities and many policy makers were content to put the education of teachers into less prestigious schools, many of which were not accredited and,

3) No one seemed to think that schools of education had lived up to their responsibilities or ever could succeed (Holmes Partnership, 2008).

The issue for the Holmes Group was how to make schools of education programs part of the solution, not the problem. In 1986, the Holmes Group published *Tomorrow's Teachers*. With this, the group set out to change the way we educate teachers, help create teaching as a true profession, cooperate with schools in inquiry that was transformational, and restructure colleges to achieve these goals. One recommendation was to build partnerships between schools and universities—the birth of the title: Professional Development School.

In 1990, the Holmes Group published *Tomorrow's Schools*, and created a set of principles that would help guide the creation of Professional Development Schools. They established standards that focused on teaching and learning for understanding, creating a learning community, continued learning by teachers, long-term inquiry, and inventing a different school structure that could help implement the above objectives.

In 1995, they published *Tomorrow's Schools of Education.* The authors analyzed how schools of education needed to change if they were to meet the promises stated in the previous two books. The Holmes Group suggested that if this were to happen, schools of education needed to change their fundamental structure. The authors recommended that teacher education administrators and faculty analyze and change their curriculum, faculty, pedagogy, students, instructional settings and groups, research and scholarship, and partnerships.

In 1996, after realizing the need to make significant change, the Holmes Group decided to form alliances with other groups. Various organizations formed the Holmes

Partnership. This partnership expanded into relationships with not just research universities, but it also included public school districts and organizations that represent professional educators. The Holmes Partnership realized that they not only needed the political advantage that came with the new formation, but if they were ever to realize their vision of teaching becoming one of the learned professions that merit the investment of higher educational establishments, they needed the intellect from all areas of educational expertise (Holmes Partnership, 2008).

According to NAPDS, the second major influence in the formation of PDS programs came from The National Network for Educational Renewal and the work of John Goodlad and colleagues. Similar to the creation of the Holmes Group, John Goodlad responded to the information stated in *A Nation at Risk* and began working on the idea of restructure, renewal and reform to help reshape America's schools. From this, Goodlad envisioned a stronger partnership between university and K-12 institutions (Davidson & Lampitt, 2008).

The National Network for Educational Renewal (NNER) is composed of university faculty in the arts, sciences and education, public school educators, and community members. This network of people is designed to make changes in the schools, changes in higher education facilities that prepare future teachers, and changes in the community in general. According to the NNER purpose statement, their goal is to "actively advance the *Agenda for Education in a Democracy.* Distinct from school reform initiatives, the Agenda is committed to the simultaneous renewal of our nation's schools and teacher preparation institutions—an ongoing process of improvement" (NNER 2009, p. 2).

John Goodlad helped establish the *Agenda for Education in a Democracy* (IEI, 2009). It is a mission-driven, research-based agenda that intends to create skills, dispositions, and knowledge in our nation's youth to help them be effective participants in a social and political democracy. The members of the *Agenda for Education in a Democracy* wish to ensure the youth have access to the skills to live satisfying and responsible lives. The members of the *Agenda for Education in a Democracy* seek to develop educators who care about the learning and well-being of all students. Finally, the members of the *Agenda for Education in a Democracy* intend to ensure educators are competent and committed to, serving as stewards of schools. The Agenda for Education in a Democracy was established to create a foundational set of principles that would give the nation's new reform era a path to follow (IEI, 2009).

In 1992, Goodlad founded the Institute for Educational Inquiry (IEI) to help advance the causes set forth in the *Agenda for Education in a Democracy*. The IEI is an independent, non-profit corporation that is funded through the support of philanthropic foundations dedicated to supporting education. IEI uses inquiry and research-based methods to evaluate and understand possible best practices in education (IEI, 2009).

Through his many organizations and in response to *A Nation at Risk*, Goodland saw the need for closer university-school partnerships. The NNER established four roles for partner schools:

1) Improve K-12 student achievement,

2) Professional Development of educators,

3) Real-world pre-service teacher education, and

4) Support research and inquiry (Davidson & Lampitt, 2008).

Through research and inquiry and through the collaboration of its members, the NNER was formed to support the hundreds of PDS programs that have been developed since the early 1990s (Levine, 1998).

With the information gleaned from *A Nation at Risk*, The Holmes Group and John Goodlad formulated two major ideas that were put to the forefront of education: increased student achievement and improved teacher preparation programs to help with the problem of our educational system. Through the work of different educational establishments to address teacher preparation and aid in school reform in general, the idea of Professional Development Schools became formalized in 1990 when The Holmes Group recommended the creation of PDS programs to provide clinical experience for pre-service students. Clinical-experience PDS programs are defined as field-based observations and school-based experiences (Cortese & Polishook, 2000). These programs were intended to bridge the gap between school's clinical experience and university's theoretical base. At about the same time, reformers called for higher student learning and for educators to focus on teaching for understanding. PDS programs were designed to address lacking student achievement, the gap between schools and universities, and improve upon teacher preparation programs that would create teachers who could further the agenda in the new climate of reform in our nation's schools (Levine, 1998).

Documentation of PDS Research

Professional Development Schools are defined in different ways and each school's definition tends to be based on their specific needs. A general definition

revolves around the creation of a partnership between a university and a school district and is one that focuses on the educational needs of the students involved. Recently, organizations have begun to focus on a more precise definition. According to the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), Professional Development Schools are:

"Innovative institutions formed through partnerships between professional education programs and P-12 schools. Their mission is professional preparation of candidates, faculty development, inquiry directed at the improvement of practice, and enhanced student learning. PDS partners are guided by a common vision of teaching and learning that is grounded in research and practitioner knowledge. PDS partners share responsibility for professionals and students; they blend their expertise and resources to meet shared goals . . . PDS partnerships are committed to providing equitable learning opportunities for all, and to preparing candidates and faculty to meet the diverse student populations . . . PDS partners work together overtime, building relationships and commitment to their shared goals" (NCATE 2001, p. 1).

According to NAPDS, PDS programs have, "a four-fold agenda: preparing future educators, providing current educators with ongoing professional development, encouraging joint school-university faculty investigation of educational related issues, and promoting the learning of P-12 students" (NAPDS, 2008, p. 1).

In the late 1990s and early 2000s, NCATE conducted a study that helped further the vision of what a PDS should resemble. From this study, it developed the NCATE PDS Standards. The five NCATE standards that address PDS characteristics are:

(1) The Learning Community,

(2) Accountability and Quality Assurance,

(3) Collaboration,

(4) Equity and Diversity, and

(5) Structures, Resources and Roles (NCATE, 2001).

NCATE defines these in greater length in their *Standards for Professional Development Schools*, published in 2001. Along with the standards, NCATE established different PDS levels:

(1) Beginning Level,

(2) Developing Level,

(3) At Standard Level, and

(4) Leading Level (NCATE, 2000, p. 7).

The Beginning level is at minimum in alignment with the standards; Developing level still has partners pursuing PDS mission and has partial institutional support; At Standard has mission of PDS partnership integrated with partnering institutions; and at the Leading Level, the PDS is impacting policy at the district, state, and national level (NCATE 2001).

According to NAPDS, many institutions were using the term PDS to mean any partnership between a university and P-12 school. In 2007, NAPDS held a summit in New Orleans to address this issue and to focus their attention to help create a common understanding of what it means to be a PDS. From this summit, nine essential requirements of a PDS were created:

(1) 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;

(2) A school-university culture committed to the preparation of future educators that embraces their active engagement in the school community:

(3) Ongoing and reciprocal professional development for all participants guided by need;

(4) A shared commitment to innovative and reflective practice by all participants;

(5) Engagement in and public sharing of the results of deliberate investigations of practice by respective participants;

(6) An articulation agreement developed by the respective participants delineating the roles and responsibilities of all involved;

(7) A structure that allows all participants a forum for ongoing governance, reflection, and collaboration;

(8) Work by college/university faculty and P-12 faculty in formal roles across institutional settings; and

(9) Dedicated and shared resources and formal rewards and recognition structures (NAPDS, 2008, pp. 2 & 3).

Achieving a common understanding is connected with the need to collect relevant data that supports the claims of the PDS model and its positive effects on teacher preparation. Although much research has been provided asserting that PDS programs are an effective approach to teacher preparation, much of the data reported to support the benefits of PDS programs is hard to quantify. PDS programs must strive to collect data on the benefits of their programs related to candidates, teachers, faculty and student

learning to help support the notion that this is an exemplary model for teacher preparation (Teitel, 2001). If there are guidelines establishing what a PDS is, then through the usage of this framework, those engaging in PDS programs can collect data that can be used to establish a credible and transferable bank of research results.

PDS programs were designed to accomplish certain goals. According to Centenary College, and in alignment with NNER and NCATE's beliefs, the PDS should provide four basic goals. While these goals may look slightly different from one PDS program to the next, the focus should be on providing a clinical setting for pre-service education, engage in professional development for practitioners, promote and conduct inquiry that advances knowledge of schooling, and provide an exemplary education for P–12 students (Centenary College, 2006). Similarly, PDS programs fall in alignment with Nancy Thompson's belief that teacher preparation programs should focus on content area preparation, age-specific knowledge, issues of early-adolescent development, and clinical experience (Thompson, 2000).

Though research needs to improve on the claims made in regards to the benefits PDS programs offer, nonetheless, research studies indicate that PDS programs improve teacher quality (U.S. Dept. of Ed., 2003), student achievement increases (UNI, 2007 & U.S. Dept. of Ed., 2003), attrition rates decrease in early teacher retention (UNI, 2007 & Latham and Vogt, 2007 & Ross, 2001), and university faculty remains aware of the realities of a K-12 setting, which may influence their teacher education classes (Kersten & Volsey, 2009).

Regarding the notion of PDS programs improving teacher quality, it is believed that teacher preparation programs that include clinical settings better prepare pre-service

educators (Thompson, 2000 & U.S. Dept. of Ed., 2003). Typical models of teacher preparation may have a candidate starting student teaching with 100 hours of contact hours. Through the PDS model, students begin student teaching with 400-600 contact hours (Crisp, 2008).

In the past few decades, having a "highly qualified" teacher in every classroom has been less than the priority in educational reform. In the 1966 Coleman Study, concluded that the largest contributor to a student's success or failure was the students' socioeconomic status—not the teacher's ability (Coleman, 1966). So, how significant is having a highly qualified teacher in the classroom? What role does the teacher play in determining student academic outcomes? Despite continuous debates if and how much teachers make a difference in student learning, research by William Saunders (1997) and others is one example that reverses Coleman's previous ideas and places the teacher as "the most important factor affecting student learning . . . The immediate and clear implication of this finding is that seemingly more can be done to improve education by improving the effectiveness of teachers than by any other single factor. Effective teachers appear to be effective with students of all achievement levels, regardless of the level of heterogeneity in their classrooms" (Wright, Horn & Saunders, 1997 pp. 57-67).

The U. S. Department of Education also states that highly qualified teachers can achieve academic goals that span socio-economic status (U.S. Dept. of Ed., 2007). Since students spend a majority of their time with the teacher, it makes sense that highly qualified teachers would make a difference in student achievement—just as it would make sense that less than highly qualified teachers would have the opposite result. The strong beliefs in the benefits of teacher quality are furthered by the federal government's

No Child Left Behind legislation, which demands that highly qualified teachers need to be a priority in educational reform.

With the signing into law of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act, the government prepared to force states into having "highly qualified" teachers in place in the core academic subjects by school year 2005-2006. According to NCLB, to be considered a highly qualified teacher, one needs to be fully certified, hold a bachelor's degree, and be able to demonstrate their knowledge and skills in their teaching subject by having taken specific coursework in their field, or by passing a state test (Woolfolk, 2007). A study conducted by RAND Education, a non-profit organization, indicated that students engaged in a collaborative were better qualified than other students and were highly regarded by administrators in the PDS (U.S. Dept. of Ed., 2003).

Improving teacher quality is only one claim to the benefits of a PDS program. Lower attrition rates are attributed to involvement in PDS programs. A study by F. Ross (2001) suggested that PDS involvement yielded higher retention rates due to the strength of the PDS program, levels of mentoring, teaching models, and connection of content with the classroom due to involvement in the school environment.

Exposure to authentic teaching creates more effective teachers. According to the U.S. Department of Education's *The Second Annual Report on Teacher Quality*, (U.S. Dept. of Ed., 2003) results from a limited review of student achievement data signified that students engaged in Professional Development Schools scored higher on standardized assessments than students in non-professional development schools.

Iowa-Grant Middle School PDS

The National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) talks about building Professional Development Schools (PDS) on a foundation of shared interest, mutual commitment, and trust. This foundation can be created through existing relationships, or certain time needs to be spent in the initial stages to create this relationship (NCATE, 2001).

The University of Wisconsin-Platteville (UW-P) followed NCATE's belief that relationships needed to be formed to create a PDS, but other stages and concerns also went into establishing the PDS at Iowa-Grant Middle School. They include:

1) Building strong relationships,

2) Finding the right person,

3) Finding the right location,

4) Long-term discussions and conversations,

5) Multiple visits,

6) Proper space, and

7) Support from different organizations (Monhardt, Braun y Harycki, McBeth, Anderson & Smith, 2009).

Building strong relationships with the community of schools in your area is a key component to creating a successful PDS. Through understanding what the needs are of that community, you can find a partnership that will be mutually beneficial. Meeting with school administration and faculty is vital in order to understand each other's needs. Through relationship building, you can find the right person and location. The right person is someone who understands what is at stake and is willing to allow the

partnership to form. The right person can be the one who helps you discover avenues that did not previously exist.

Investigating your learning community and gaining exposure to its people can help you find the best location. Having proper space, an empty room for the PDS group, for example, can be a vital component to determining the right location. School needs and current trends are also important factors when making a decision on a PDS site.

The process for beginning the PDS partnership between Iowa-Grant Middle School and the University of Wisconsin-Platteville included meetings between Iowa-Grant faculty and administrators, and UW-P professors and administrators. Possible participants then visited Clarke College's PDS, which operates in two elementary schools. On February 1, 2007, Iowa-Grant faculty and administrators visited Fulton Elementary, and on April 23, 2007, they visited St. Anthony's Elementary School (Monhardt, Braun y Harycki, McBeth, Anderson & Smith, 2009).

The initial process continued during an Iowa-Grant in-service day on February 16, 2007, when UW-P professors presented, *Exploring Professional Development School Opportunities*. On May 21, 2007, UW-P presented the partnership plan to the Iowa-Grant School District Board of Education. The Iowa-Grant Middle School partnership with the University of Wisconsin-Platteville was finalized after being approved by the board on a unanimous vote (Monhardt, Braun y Harycki, McBeth, Anderson & Smith, 2009).

On August 21, 2007, UW-P PDS professors and the administrator met with Iowa-Grant Middle School administrators. On September 4, 2007, UW-P pre-service students, a graduate student, and UW-P professors traveled to Iowa-Grant Middle School for an

introduction to the school (Monhardt, Braun y Harycki, McBeth, Anderson & Smith, 2009).

Chapter 3

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

Methodology

During the fall semester of 2007, I began my research by personally observing the Professional Development School (PDS) participants—PDS students, early-adolescent students, Iowa-Grant teachers and university professors. While at the PDS, I gathered information through regular observations and the creation of field notes. Twice during the semester I assigned PDS students to write reflective papers.

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sources—27 PDS candidates and seven IGMS faculty, plus field notes and conversations with three UW-P professors. Iowa-Grant students were not formally engaged in the case study. The data is reported through categories of emphasis in relation to input from surveys, reflections, and questionnaires.

Procedures

In the beginning of the semester, during the pilot program of 2007, I created a formal reflection for the PDS students and a short survey (Appendix A) for the Iowa-Grant teachers, both focusing on expectations for the semester. Since this was a new endeavor, I wanted to establish early expectations of those involved. After this initial engagement, I monitored the movement of the PDS students in relation to what they were doing, how much time was spent with middle school students, and how much time was spent with professors. This was accomplished through daily logs (Appendix B) that PDS students completed and through my observations and field notes.

As the semester progressed, near the mid-point, I asked PDS students to submit a formal reflective paper answering questions based on the progression of the semester and how their views have shifted or changed. This involved questions such as:

- How have your expectations changed or how have they been met? What are your concerns regarding the PDS so far?
- What are your best experiences so far?
- How do you feel about how the PDS is structured?
- How have your relationships with students and teachers changed over the weeks?

○What ever else you would like to add.

And finally, during the last week I created a formal reflection assignment that asked questions about how their PDS involvement affected their teaching progress. It involved having PDS students answering the following questions:

○ What do you believe is/are the greatest strength(s) of the PDS?

○ What do you believe is/are the greatest weakness(es) of the PDS?

○ Do you believe your involvement has improved and/or weakened your teaching skills?

○ How do you feel regarding the progression of your semester? What could have been changed?

○ What was your greatest experience during your time in the PDS program?

○ What would you like to see changed for future PDS students?

○ How did professors help/hurt your time with the PDS?

○ How did the middle school teachers help and/or hurt your time with the PDS?

○ How did I—teacher, supervisor, researcher—help and/or hurt your time with the PDS?

○ Any other thoughts you would like to add.

Also, I created a final questionnaire (Appendix C) that was given to I-GEM faculty. The final questions I asked the teachers were:

○ Did the PDS program have an impact on your students? If so, how?

○Did it have an impact on your teaching? If so, how?

○Has it changed your perception of UW-P?

○ Is there anything else you would like to add?

The one group I did not engage in a formal manner was the middle school students. Due to the nature of the audience, under eighteen, I would have had to get consent from parents and/or guardians and this was something I chose to avoid. Nonetheless, I believe information was obtained about this group indirectly from teacher's and PDS student's input.

After gathering data from PDS students, I began the coding process. I obtained colored pencils and began reading through the data. When a topic surfaced, such as, "being in a middle school for a semester really exposed me to the behaviors of adolescents and what a semester of teaching really looks like," I simply picked a color and underlined that passage. I then made a key: yellow = immersion in middle school setting. Every time I read something that involved the middle school setting, I would underline it in yellow. After coding the data, I realized that some categories I created were similar and had common threads. I reexamined the categories and condensed them into four major ideas that were repeated throughout the coding process:

(1) Benefits of relationships developed,

(2) Immersion in an authentic middle-school setting,

(3) Exposure to authentic teaching, and

(4) Preparation for student teaching.

The same procedure was repeated with information gained from Iowa-Grant faculty. Similar themes appeared in their responses. Looking back through my field notes, the themes were verified through triangulating the three sources—my personal field notes, Iowa-Grant faculty responses, and UW-P pre-service PDS students. Similar themes were repeated throughout the data collected. Themes revolved around the idea

that through the benefits of creating relationships in an actual middle school where authentic teaching is modeled and student behavior is seen every day, pre-service PDS students were better prepared teachers through the PDS experience than through university classes only.

The data collected answered my central question, which was, "how would the PDS affect their progression as future educators." In most of the data collected, responses expressed that the relationships—with professors, Iowa-Grant faculty, and middle-school students—gave PDS students guided practice in an authentic setting that improved their teaching progression, making PDS students better prepared for student teaching and the teaching profession in general.

Participants

Iowa-Grant Middle School is located in rural Wisconsin, in the town of Livingston. Student enrollment between grades 5-8 is 312. While working with many teachers, are partnership dealt primarily with 4 female and 6 male teachers in grades 5-8. The participants involved in the study include (1) university pre-service students, (2) professors, (3) a graduate student/supervisor/researcher; (4) Iowa-Grant Middle School students (informally), and (5) Iowa-Grant Middle School teachers and the school's principal. Nine PDS students participated in the fall 2007 semester and 18 participated in the fall 2008 semester. During both semesters Iowa-Grant faculty input was included, with less than ten participating in the research.

Chapter 4

ANALYSIS OF SURVEY DATA

Summary

The statement of the problem was to ascertain this pilot PDS program's pedagogical impacts through relationships developed between UW-P pre-service teachers, Iowa-Grant Middle School faculty, and UW-P professors.

During the fall semester of 2007, I began the case study by personally observing the PDS participants—PDS students, early-adolescent students, Iowa-Grant teachers and university professors. While at the PDS, I gathered information through regular observations and the creation of field notes. Twice during the semester, I assigned PDS students to write reflective papers. They described their experiences at the PDS. I also created a final questionnaire that was given to I-GEM faculty. After gathering information and through the process of coding, common themes began to surface.

The repeated topics found throughout my research consistently referred to the PDS as being the preferred approach to teacher preparation by the PDS students. Their comments spanned from the PDS preparing them for student teaching, to giving them a chance to be involved in guided practice in their profession. The breadth of information collected eventually funneled into two broad topics: (1) being in an actual middle school setting and (2) the relationships that were formed in that setting. It appeared that without the authentic middle school setting, the benefits could not have existed. So, benefits began by getting university students into an authentic setting; from that setting, the following results were made possible.

My research data highlighted benefits that derived from four major areas revolving around relationships built in an authentic setting. This list is centered on the PDS students. The following information was gathered over two semesters of PDS engagement and focuses on comments from PDS students. After this collection of data, I will provide information gathered from middle school faculty and university professors.

The following data is presented in words from the PDS students and is centered on (1) what they found most beneficial about the PDS and (2) how the PDS affected their teaching skills. It starts with what they found most beneficial about the PDS and that information is divided into:

(1) Benefits of relationships developed,

(2) Immersion in an authentic middle-school setting,

(3) Exposure to authentic teaching, and

(4) Preparation for student teaching.

All information is quoted and will remain anonymous, but I have received written consent from PDS students to use this information.

When asked what the major strength of the PDS was, I received the following responses and I have broken them into the previously mentioned categories.

(1) <u>The benefits of relationships developed:</u>

- Develop close relationships with all involved
- It is good practice talking to adults; that might sound dumb, but in years past, I've rarely had to speak to a professor outside of the classroom, much less talk to a

school superintendent and principal and attempt to get a copy of every single textbook.

- We had a great team of knowledgeable professors.
- Make strong connections
- Forming bonds with students and teachers.
- Tutoring is one thing, but being able to interact with all of the staff, be able to plan lessons, grade papers, and so on, makes it seem as though we are already teaching.
- I think this program allows all of the "student teachers" to become better friends, and by working together they begin to understand the importance of teaching and what this profession entails. For example, I was able to establish many new friends through the PDS and without this experience I might not have ever met or talked with any of these people. I became very comfortable around them and was very open with them about various topics.
- At first I was more nervous talking with teachers than with students.
- At first I felt like an intruder, I now have formed great relationships.
- I believe the day-to-day access to actual middle school students was the main strength of the PDS.
- The interaction with students and fellow PDS students was helpful.
- Working as a team.
- Being actively involved in classrooms helped us build personal relationships with teachers and students.
- Helping individuals below grade level in reading and comprehension.

- The students were comfortable around us and towards the end of the semester did not want us to leave.
- We were able to make some connections with the students.
- Forming bonds with students/teachers; seeing how middle school students act.
- Seeing how middle school students act and develop.

(2) <u>Immersion in the authentic middle school setting:</u>

- The ability to totally immerse oneself in the middle school. To have no other focus other than what you are doing at the middle school is extremely beneficial.
- The greatest strength of the PDS is that it allows you to get a true understanding of what takes place in a middle school through the course of the semester. From assemblies, to PAWs, to hyper kids when they realize its snowing, to teachers heckling the students in the hallway . . . It is a full immersion program that allows us to experience so much more than we could on campus.
- The greatest strength of the PDS is actually getting in class experience. No university classroom can give anybody as good of look at teaching as being in the middle school classroom.
- Learn techniques then go into classroom and immediately apply.
- I believe the greatest strength of the PDS is getting students into a classroom.
- The second greatest strength would have to be the Iowa-Grant teachers giving us feedback on what we were doing right and what we were doing wrong.
- Immediate response by faculty and students.

- I think the PDS is very beneficial for all students who are pursuing the education field. I learned many new things about teaching and the real-life and hands-on experiences help make it enjoyable.
- Better than sitting in a regular classroom
- Try out teaching methods in real world setting
- Immediate positive learning
- The ability to take theory that we learn in the classroom and apply it to real world environments.
- Being in a middle school everyday.
- The greatest strength of the PDS was the opportunity to be involved in the classroom every single day.
- It was such an advantage for us to be in the school, in the classroom on a daily basis.
- Having access to not only a principal, but also a superintendent was an advantage not available in a college classroom.
- Cannot imagine going to a methods class after seeing potential of PDS program.
- The immediate theory to practice approach is beneficial to implementing teaching skills.
- Also, in the way that this program is set up, when we are using the theories we learn in class, we are never alone and usually have another PDS student with us, and a teacher.

(3) <u>Exposure to real life teaching:</u>

- If the student was allowed to teach daily, learning how to teach one lesson throughout the day allowed the PDS student to gain better confidence.
- Observe actual teachers.
- Having four teachers with different teaching styles demonstrated how important it is to be clear and concise with expectations and assignments when I am a teacher.
- Each chance at teaching becomes more comfortable and effective
- Getting out into the classroom and gaining confidence in teaching.
- Being directly involved in the classroom, with students and with teachers. I learned a lot of useful information and ideas through this. I was able to teach several lessons and learned right and wrong ways to teach.
- Is hand-on teaching. Working with the students in study halls, teaching pre-made lessons, and eventually teaching my own lessons was great.
- The PDS allows students to experience what teaching is like and if it is the career for them.
- Beginning point of our professional career.
- Is the last step for us to find out if teaching is what we really want to do.

(4) <u>Preparation for student teaching:</u>

- PDS was a great experience for students to see what student teaching will be like.
- The program prepares us for student teaching greatly.
- It gave us the ability to teach lessons before we student teach.
- It helped raise our confidence before we student taught.

- I liked that we had a concrete schedule and at IGEMS for the whole semester. It allowed us to experience what student teaching was going to be like
- Better prepared for student teaching
- The PDS allows a prospective teacher to get introduced slowly into the classroom, getting a sense of what it will be like during the student teaching semester and beyond.
- Great opportunity before student teaching

The next collection of data is information from PDS students regarding whether or not their involvement in the PDS improved or weakened their teaching skills. As you will see, the information was positive, and while this result was expected and stated under the "assumptions" section, the specific reasons help shed light on why the PDS program in particular, improved their teaching skills. Again, all information presented is from PDS students and I have received written consent to share their responses.

When asked this question, "Do you believe your PDS involvement has improved or weakened your teaching skills?" these are some of their responses:

- It definitely improved my teaching skills. I was nervous at the beginning and inexperienced in front of a classroom and lesson planning. I feel more comfortable now in many aspects of teaching and much more comfortable going into my student teaching semester.
- I feel 100 times more confidant to be up in front of the classroom teaching subjects.

- The ability to interact with students on a daily basis has strengthened my ability to interact with students on a more personal level. Also, the plethora of opportunities to teach was amazing; I was learning on the first day and teaching by the 4th week.
- Without a doubt, PDS involvement has drastically improved my teaching skills. Being in front of the students so often increased my confidence, which I know, is directly related to my teaching ability. I also now have a much better idea of what type of lessons will actually work in the classroom.
- I would say that it has improved my skills one hundred percent. I absolutely loved the lessons that I have learned from working with the teachers and students. It was kind of like a crash course in teaching but we had professors there to show us what we did wrong and how to improve it. I think if I did not have this course that I would be pretty lost when it came to student teaching.
- It tremendously improved my teaching skills. With having no prior teaching experience before PDS, I would have gone into student teaching stone cold. PDS allowed me to rid most of my jitters before I student teach. By having the opportunity to teach multiple lessons and a unit, I went into student teaching already knowing some of my strengths and weaknesses.
- The PDS involvement has improved my teaching skills dramatically. I didn't really know how to approach students or other teachers before I went to Iowa-Grant. I feel way more confident than I did a year ago. This program allowed me to physically and mentally know that I would like to be a teacher and continue my teaching career. This program was very beneficial to me.

- I became very comfortable in the classroom. I know that it can be a slow process getting started, but once I got my bearings in the room I felt great. I also think that being at the PDS helped lots of us with working together on teams where there are differences of opinions. We learned that it doesn't matter whom your team members are, you still have to work with them. That was a challenge many of us had to overcome.
- My PDS involvement improved my teaching skills with exposure to numerous teaching theories. I planned and executed lessons weekly, and created a unique approach to classroom management.
- It helped by forcing me to create lesson plans and it was a way for me to experiment with different methods and see what I do well and where I need to improve upon.
- I think this experience improved my teaching skills and made me a better teacher during the process. I learned and applied many different methods and teaching strategies in the classroom. Having worked in the classroom and had the opportunity to teach numerous lessons, I now have the confidence and experience to be a quality teacher. I understand the importance of creating assignments that are relevant to the students in my class and ways to reflect on lessons I have taught and how to make improvements on them to give students a chance at succeeding.
- The PDS improved my teaching skills and interpersonal skills with other educators. I gained confidence working with the same group of students and their

teachers. I now know who to ask if I need help or questions answered within the school environment.

- I have never been able to create my own lesson and teach it to students in any college course throughout my schooling. I taught units and I was able to improve lessons from one class to another and see how students progressed throughout the units. I learned a lot of great methods to apply to teaching and was able to try some of the methods in the lessons I taught. I will feel more confident when I student teach.
- Any in-class teaching time can only help to improve your skills; I don't believe there is any way it can weaken them.
- I gained some very important knowledge about teaching from the PDS semester. I picked up some teaching strategies from the professors as well as from other teachers. I think all educators should have an opportunity to do something like this. Many of my friends are education majors and had nothing as personal or educational as the PDS. Service learning hours and practicum are a joke compared to the PDS experience. The only thing better than the PDS experience would be student teaching.

The next section of data focuses on information gathered from Iowa-Grant faculty, which includes teachers and administrators. Again, most of the data fits into the previously mentioned categories of relationships, authentic setting, pre-service preparation through teaching exposure, and impact on student teaching, but, with the insight from teachers and administrators, the impact on the profession in general was a

new area of data. The following information is quoted from Iowa-Grant teachers and administrators, and I have been given permission to use their input, which will remain anonymous.

Relationships

- Great impact, a lot of connections early on in study halls, helped them (students) to realize the importance of getting their work done, but also realize there were people there to help them; a lot of kids asked for help that wouldn't have if the PDS students were not there; making the connections was what mattered for the students.
- Plenty of people to help them; plenty of people around to make connections to, and it was apparent that people cared, and they could see they cared if they were doing a good job. The numbers helped, but it wasn't just the numbers, the PDS students were really into helping, it wasn't just someone who just showed up . . . the PDS students showed a lot of interest in the students getting their work done; they (PDS students) were really into it; and so that enthusiasm rubbed off onto the IG students.
- [Did you like the team aspect] . . . that was better, I think, than a rotation, because I got to work with a few people (candidates); I told them that I look at this as team teaching . . .
- I told them (PDS students) that this would be done through team teaching and we should all feel comfortable to interrupt each other and help out with the process to keep the flow going and if one of us was struggling, another could jump in and help out.

- Collaboration with PDS students was a good mix, both trying new stuff.
- Liked that UWP was trying something new; benefits UWP students for student teaching.
- Students helped with WKCE's and MAPs testing.
- Helped with catching up students that were behind; PDS students helped with that and it allowed me to continue teaching without getting behind.
- Allowed more in front of class time; focus on other ideas; introduced new ideas; provided different perspectives.
- Students bonded with PDS students. Created trust with PDS students, and they knew they could get help from them, and they knew they would be working in small groups.
- (I-G teachers) created trust as the semester went along; it allowed them to do things they might not have been able to do in a regular setting. Allowed for smaller groups to be formed and it allowed an extra adult interaction with I-G students which gave the teachers extra feedback.
- PDS students became a part of the faculty over the course of the semester. Yesterday, as they said goodbye, it was sincere, and that is typical in the work world.
- This was a much more intimate relationship with UW-P. Really some good things took place from our staff's perspective. And I think from the UW's perspective. It probably changed my perspective on how I thought they were training teachers.

- I think they (university professors) came away with some things that they are probably going to infuse into their curriculum, this is a trend that we see taking place, that maybe they wouldn't have exposure to in a college classroom.
- Communication was the key to why things went well . . . we kept all informed on what was happening and what needed to happen.

Authentic Setting

- [Having PDS students in] study halls, extra people, help stay on task, more bodies, students actually looked forward to study halls.
- [PDS students built] rapport and connections with students, specialize, one-on-one; students asked about them (PDS students) when they left.
- They (PDS students) got to see a variety of behaviors, great exposure for PDS students.
- They (university professors) got to see what are the issues, what are the trends happening currently in a public school. This is a typical rural middle school. Helps them maintain a better sense of reality.
- We had a more intimate setting verse the "all theory" classroom. Theory mixed with application in a real life setting. This all combines to benefit the college.

Pre-Service Preparation

- PDS students were allowed to come into a working middle school, got to develop relationships with students and staff, and really see first-hand how bright some students are and how well they excel . . . and they got to see how some students

struggle and just to have that vast exposure to the different students was an eye-opening experience that these PDS students became aware of at an early stage of their educational careers.

- The sheer exposure to the variety of things that take place in a public school, from a teaching perspective, they are going to have an unfair advantage when they go out to student teach.
- These guys (PDS students) are ready to do student teaching . . . I had some pre-student teachers and we were told to kind of let them do a couple lessons in the 8 or 9 weeks, but they could do more; They were not nearly as in front and in charge as the PDS students; PDS students did several lessons on their own, while I was in the room; they were my lessons, but they led the kids through them.
- When the faculty people came out, whether it was reading methods, they were able to talk about it and literally were able to walk across the hall and implement the strategies, there will be less lost in transition. It was also easier for them to capture what the faculty advisor wanted to take place.
- I think there was a better infusion of practical, day to day, what's happening and how do I react to it from the IG faculty, but that was infused with methodology taught by the UW-P faculty.
- I had several conversations with PDS students. You could tell their heart was in it. You go through the traditional classroom setting, you get frustrated with that third year, whether your going to finish, and that's where a lot of these folks were at, but I think this infused a lot of energy into them, and has given them hope, 'I can't wait to student teach,' 'I can't wait to get back out into the classroom again.'

Impact on Profession

- Freed the teacher up to focus on others; [and] improve existing lesson plans.
- Interaction with PDS students helped. Big project help; got to see how literature circles went, collaboration was big.
- It stimulated creativity and held us more accountable.
- I also think that if someone's heart wasn't into this, their probably going to opt out at semester. And this will then essentially save time, money, and resources. I think it will benefit education because, rather than washing out the first three years of teaching, as the national norm says, x amount of teachers do so, we will catch it earlier.
- I think they [I-G teachers] made a concerted effort to figure out—what are we doing, where are we going, what is are next step and how can I assist this PDS student, but yet when they were looking to assist the PDS student, it didn't have the effect of slowing down our curriculum; I think they probably thought things through a little bit more, or looked at it from a different perspective than they would have if it was just themselves in the classroom. More of a retrospective in the present tense.
- You could say that there was a slight, subtle increase in their (I-G teachers) workload. But on the flip side, what the PDS students brought to the table was when they were able to work in small groups, it took some of the workload off the I-G teachers, so I think there were trade-offs. But, overall, the feedback I received in grades 6-8 have been very, very positive. They do not feel as if there

was an additional workload on them; I feel there was a slight shift in workload; but in the end we gained so much more than what slight workload increase there may have been.

- I-G can offer advice from experienced teachers on what works best for them; UW-P can offer teachers what they have to offer and there can be a combined, shared exchange of ideas. New trends at the college level, with real world experience in the classroom.
- Really pleased with how the semester went. Hope that this is a program that will continue in the future. I think it will lead to polished initial educators that will be less likely to leave the profession . . . national average says we are experiencing too much teacher burnout or dropout, I think this is a program that really prepares for the long-hall, and is vital to education.

Conclusion

During my two years of involvement in the PDS, I witnessed, through informal and formal data collecting methods, how the PDS benefited those involved. The obvious conclusion of PDS students becoming better teachers by actually teaching middle school students was expected in my original assumption and confirmed by PDS students and middle school faculty and university professors. But many other benefits surfaced that were not so obvious to me at the beginning. By forming relationships on many levels, a cultural exchange exposed all involved to the many faucets of the teaching field; this was exposure that would not have been possible solely in the isolation of the university classroom.

When candidates are allowed to learn how to teach in authentic situations, deeper understandings were experienced. In a middle school setting, the theories that were learned in the university classroom could immediately be put into practice. When dealing with the needs of P-12 students on a daily basis, the cultural exchange of theory and practice aided Pre-Service learners. By engaging in partnerships at a middle school, the PDS allowed candidates to learn through immersion in the middle school process over an entire semester, giving them a realistic profile of what teaching encompasses.

There is also a pattern of guided practice, which is structured to lead to independent learning. When experienced teachers and university professors worked together, it gave PDS students learning opportunities that helped form deeper understandings from an authentic setting/learning environment. Professors take a position of focused mentor of real life middle school situations. When candidates become student teachers, they already have a semester of guidance in understanding how the semester will proceed. They have already been exposed to the process and will be able to be more competent as a student teacher. The idea of guided practice flows more smoothly in a PDS than compared to traditional methods in that there is not the sudden jump from university classroom theory to the full immersion of student teaching. The PDS semester prior to student teaching is a sensible, smoother transition; one that diminishes the shock of full-time teacher, so abruptly realized during that first week of student teaching.

The PDS also gives candidates teaching exposure outside their area of concentration. Ever more, middle school teachers are expected to teach more than one subject. The PDS format allows candidates the opportunities to see how teachers cross

over in their roles as teachers of multiple fields. Moreover, PDS programs give university students exposure to a variety of real-life teachers that serve as examples and mentors of what teachers do on a daily basis.

The Educational Testing Service (ETS) supports the inclusion of clinical teaching experiences in teacher preparation and as part of the teacher licensure (Educational Testing Service, 2004). I have witnesses how a PDS program improves teacher quality and preparedness, and, as ETS states, put pre-service candidates into more clinical, authentic, experiential learning settings. PDS programs put candidates into a school setting, giving candidates more exposure to authentic learning situations.

Chapter 5

Statement of Problem

The statement of the problem was to ascertain this pilot PDS program's pedagogical impacts through relationships developed between UW-P pre-service teachers, Iowa-Grant Middle School faculty, and UW-P professors.

Summary of Literature

Under the aegis of laboratory schools, the idea of Professional Development Schools (PDS) has existed since the late nineteenth century. Woloszky and Davis (1993) described these early PDS prototypes as school settings that focused on the professional development of future teachers and for development of pedagogy. Laboratory schools within schools of education were the earliest forms of Professional Development Schools. John Dewey compared teachers' professional development labs to those of science or medical practitioners (Woloszky & Davis, 1993).

Modern professional development school programs may have developed because the increase in the political awareness at the state of our educational system. The first U.S. Secretary of Education, T.H. Bell, created the National Commission on Excellence in Education on August 26, 1981. The commissioners examined the quality of education in the United States and reported their findings. In April 1983, *A Nation at Risk* was released. The commissioners stated that significant reform was needed in public education (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983).

One of the *A Nation at Risk* findings was the need for raising standards for teachers and enhancing their educational preparation (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). Researchers from The Holmes Group responded to the information presented in the *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform* (DIANE, 1994). The issue for the Holmes Group was how to make schools of education programs part of the solution, not the problem. It began in response to the three trends stated in the *A Nation at Risk* report:

> 1) Many of the nation's strongest universities were eliminating their schools of education to strengthen their other professional schools,
>
> 2) These same universities and many policy makers were content to put the education of teachers into less prestigious schools, many of which were not accredited and,
>
> 3) No one seemed to think that schools of education had lived up to their responsibilities or ever could succeed (Holmes Partnership, 2008).

In 1986, the Holmes Group published *Tomorrow's Teachers*. With this, the group set out to change the way we educate teachers, help create teaching as a true profession, cooperate with schools in inquiry that was transformational, and restructure colleges to achieve these goals. One recommendation was to build partnerships between schools and universities—the birth of the title of Professional Development School.

Recently, two major organizations have immerged to focus on PDS programs: the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) and the National Association for Professional Development Schools (NAPDS).

PDS programs were designed to many things. According to Centenary College, and in alignment with National Network for Education Renewal (NNER) and NCATE's beliefs, the PDS should provide four basic goals. While these goals may look slightly different from one PDS program to the next, the focus should be to:

(1) Provide a clinical setting for pre-service education,

(2) Engage in professional development for practitioners,

(3) Promote and conduct inquiry that advances knowledge of schooling, and

(4) Provide an exemplary education for P–12 students (Centenary College, 2006).

Similarly, PDS programs fall in alignment with Nancy Thompson's belief that teacher preparation programs should focus on content area preparation, age-specific knowledge, issues of early-adolescent development, and clinical experience (Thompson, 2000).

Though research needs to improve on the claims made in regards to the benefits PDS programs offer, nonetheless, research states that PDS programs improve teacher quality (U.S. Dept. of Ed., 2003), student achievement increases (UNI, 2007 & U.S. Dept. of Ed., 2003), attrition rates decrease in early teacher retention (UNI, 2007 & Latham and Vogt, 2007 & Ross, 2001), and university faculty remains aware of the realities of a K-12 setting, which may influence their teacher education classes (Kersten & Volsey, 2009).

Regarding the notion of PDS programs improving teacher quality, it is believed that teacher preparation programs that include clinical settings prepare pre-service educators better (Thompson, 2000 & U.S. Dept. of Ed., 2003). Typical models of teacher preparation may have a candidate starting student teaching with 100 hours of contact

hours. Through the PDS model, students begin student teaching with 400-600 contact hours (Crisp, 2008).

In the past few decades, having a "highly qualified" teacher in every classroom has been less than the priority in educational reform. How significant is having a highly qualified teacher in the classroom? What role does the teacher play in determining student academic outcomes? Despite continuous debates if and how much teachers make a difference in student learning, research by Wright, Horn and Sanders (1997) state that highly qualified teachers are "the most important factor affecting student learning . . . The immediate and clear implication of this finding is that seemingly more can be done to improve education by improving the effectiveness of teachers than by any other single factor. Effective teachers appear to be effective with students of all achievement levels, regardless of the level of heterogeneity in their classrooms" (Wright, Horn & Saunders, 1997 pp. 57-67). PDS programs appear to address this need and many others.

Summary of Methods

During the fall semester of 2007, I began the case study by personally observing the PDS participants—PDS students, early-adolescent students, Iowa-Grant teachers and university professors. While at the PDS, I gathered information through regular observations and the creation of field notes. Twice during the semester, I assigned PDS students to write reflective papers. They described their experiences at the PDS.

At the end each semester, I interviewed faculty at Iowa-Grant Middle School (IGMS) and transcribed their comments. For those not interviewed, I left a questionnaire to be answered voluntarily. Finally, I queried professors involved in the PDS.

Information was gathered over two full semesters. When starting the second PDS semester in the fall of 2008, I repeated the processes mentioned above for the new PDS participants.

Summary of Findings

My research data highlighted benefits that derived from four major areas revolving around relationships built in an authentic setting. That information is divided into:

(1) Benefits of relationships developed,

(2) Immersion in an authentic middle-school setting,

(3) Exposure to authentic teaching, and

(4) Preparation for student teaching.

By forming relationships on many levels, a cultural exchange exposed all involved to the many faucets of the teaching field; this was exposure that would not have been possible solely in the isolation of the university classroom.

When candidates are allowed to learn how to teach in authentic situations, deeper understandings were experienced. In a middle school setting, the theories that were learned in the university classroom could immediately be put into practice. When dealing with the needs of P-12 students on a daily basis, the cultural exchange of theory and practice aided Pre-Service learners. By engaging in partnerships at a middle school, the PDS allowed candidates to learn through immersion in the middle school process over an entire semester, giving them a realistic profile of what teaching encompasses.

There is also a pattern of guided practice, which is structured to lead to independent learning. When experienced teachers and university professors worked together, it gave PDS students learning opportunities that helped form deeper understandings from an authentic setting/learning environment. Professors take a position of focused mentor of real life middle school situations. When candidates become student teachers, they already have a semester of guidance in understanding how the semester will proceed. They have already been exposed to the process and will be able to be more competent as a student teacher. The idea of guided practice flows more smoothly in a PDS than compared to traditional methods in that there is not the sudden jump from university classroom theory to the full immersion of student teaching. The PDS semester prior to student teaching is a sensible, smoother transition; one that diminishes the shock of full-time teacher, so abruptly realized during that first week of student teaching.

Recommendations

- Research into Iowa-Grant Middle School student grades and how they were affected since 2007 when the PDS began.
- Comparison of traditional and non-traditional methods of teacher preparation should be researched in greater depth.
- The faculty involved with the PDS program should remain in contact with students who went through the program and monitor their progress in relation to employment, and if they remained in the profession.

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APPENDIX

Appendix A:

Professional Development School
Program Survey

September 4, 2008

Dear [redacted] Faculty,

To better understand the impacts and expectations of [redacted] PDS involvement at [redacted] Elementary Middle School, I would greatly appreciate it if you could take a few moments, at your convenience, to look through and answer the questions on the back side. When you have finished, please put it in the PDS mailbox, located in the main office; or, drop it into the suggestion box in front of room 432. Thank you for your time and energy.

[redacted]
PDS Graduate Student Teacher
[redacted]

What grade level do you teach? 6 7 8 (please circle one)

Please turn sheet over to begin survey

Appendix A, continued:

Beginning of Survey:

	Not at All	Very Little	Possibly	Somewhat	To a Great Extent
Do you expect student grades to change because of PDS? (increase or decrease, circle one)					
Do you expect student behavior to change because of PDS? (improve or worsen, circle one)					
Do you believe PDS students have positive instruction to contribute to the classroom?					
Do you expect your work load to change because of PDS student involvement? (increase or decrease, circle one)					
Do you believe [redacted] faculty was prepared for the PDS model?					
Do you believe [redacted] is supporting the PDS adequately?					

Appendix A, continued:

Open Response Questions:

Who do you believe will benefit with PDS students' involvement at [redacted]?

What benefits do you expect with PDS students' involvement at [redacted]?

What concerns do you have with PDS students' involvement at [redacted]?

Appendix B

UW-P PDS Student Daily Log

Name: **Date:**

Hour

	Activity	**Objective**
Before School		
1st		
2nd		
3rd		
4th		
5th		
Lunch		
6th		
7th		
8th		

Appendix C:

Final Thoughts

For your final reflection please answer the following questions, providing as many examples as you can, and of course your honest thoughts. Your responses will remain anonymous. The following questions are designed to improve the PDS for future students going through the program. Please take some time to answer the questions thoroughly and give examples when you can. If you need more space, please use the back or use a word processor. Please return to [redacted] or the [redacted] School of Education.

Circle one: Male or Female Age: _____

What do you believe is/are the greatest strength(s) of the PDS?

What do you believe is/are the greatest weakness(es) of the PDS?

Do you believe your PDS involvement has improved or weakened your teaching skills?

How do you feel about the progression of your involvement in the PDS from week one to the end? How could it be improved or changed? Example—starting with study halls, then moving to writing a lesson, was that a good progression? How would you change or add to this progression?

What was your greatest experience during your time in the PDS program?

What would you like to see changed in the PDS for future students?

Any other thoughts you may want to share:

Appendix D:

CONSENT FORM FOR [redacted] TEACHER PARTICIPATION IN PDS RESEARCH [redacted]

1. Purpose:
   The purpose of this research is to better understand the perceptions and impacts of the Professional Development School program at [redacted] Middle School.

2. Procedure:
   You will be asked several scripted questions, leading to open conversation on thoughts you wish to contribute.

3. Time required:
   Your participation will involve 5-10 minutes depending on time available.

4. Risks:
   It is not anticipated that this study will present any risk to you other than the inconvenience of time taken to participate.

5. Your rights as a participant:
   The information gathered will be recorded and direct quotes may be used for final research paper. If you wish to remain anonymous, please write anonymous after your signature and your information will be used, but no direct quotes will be included.

   If at any time you have questions, please contact:

   [redacted] Researcher
   [redacted] Faculty Sponsor
   Department of Education
   [redacted]

6. If you have any concerns about your treatment as a participant in this study, please call or write:

   [redacted] Director
   Office of Sponsored Programs
   [redacted]

I have read the above information and willingly consent to participate in this research.

Printed name:

Signed: Date:

Appendix E:

CONSENT FORM FOR PDS STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN PDS RESEARCH [redacted]

1. Purpose:
   The purpose of this research is to better understand the perceptions and impacts of the Professional Development School (PDS) program at [redacted] Middle School.

2. Procedure:
   You will be asked several scripted questions which will lead to open conversation on thoughts you wish to contribute. Note: as PDS students, your logs, reflections, and my field notes will be used in the research.

3. Time required:
   Your participation will involve 5-10 minutes depending on time available.

4. Risks:
   It is not anticipated that this study will present any risk to you other than the inconvenience of the time taken to participate.

5. Your rights as a participant:
   The information gathered will be recorded and direct quotes may be used. If you wish to remain anonymous, please write anonymous after your signature and your information will be used, but no direct quotes will be included.

   If at any time you have questions, please contact:

   [redacted] Researcher
   [redacted] Faculty Sponsor
   Department of Education UWP
   [redacted]

6. If you have any concerns about your treatment as a participant in this study, please call or write:

   [redacted] Director
   Office of Sponsored Programs
   [redacted] [redacted]

I have read the above information and willingly consent to participate in this research.

Printed name:

Signed: Date:

Appendix F:

Questions for teachers

Did the PDS program have an impact on your students? If so, how?

Did it have an impact on your teaching? If so, how?

What was the impact on your teaching load?

Has it changed your perception of UWP?

Would you like UWP to help/provide professional development for you?

Is there anything else you want to say or add?

Appendix G:

Glossary

Field-based Observation: Notes created within a case study through observations within the studies environment.

IGMS: Iowa-Grant Middle School

NAPDS: National Association for Professional Development Schools.

NCATE: National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education.

NNER: National Network for Educational Renewal.

Pre-Service Students: Students enrolled in a teacher preparation program within a School of Education.

PDS: Professional Development School

Professional Development School (PDS): Professional Development Schools "are innovative institutions formed through partnerships between professional education programs and P-12 schools" (NCATE, 2007, p. 1). A programmatic mission of a PDS is to prepare students for professional service. This mission is not simply focused on the professional preparation of PDS students, but it also involves faculty development both at the university and the cooperating school, and increased student learning. PDS programs focus on the improvement of the practice of education, with their goal to enhance student learning (NCATE, 2007).

Pedagogy: The art, practice, or profession of teaching.

Case Study: The researcher explores in depth a program, an event, an activity, a process, or one or more individuals. The case(s) are bounded by time and activity, and researchers collect detailed information using a variety of data collection procedures over a sustained period of time (Creswell, 2003

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Appendix G, continued:

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