Generating PDS Possibility and Practicality Thinking Using a Case and Protocol Tool to Enhance PDS Development

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ABSTRACT: An important feature of professional development school (PDS) work is encouraging collaborative reflective dialogue that guides a partnership toward actualizing the possibilities for and mission of a PDS. This article provides a *case illustration* of a fictitious, exemplary PDS and a *protocol* that in combination can be used by PDSs interested in generating possibilities for their partnership development. As PDSs enter their second and third decades of existence, sustainability and accountability for authentic and deep partnership activities becomes increasingly complex to initiate and sustain. Given the importance of understanding the key features of PDS work, PDS educators benefit by using tools that help partnerships continually build important structures and roles as well as the "signature pedagogy" that often sets PDSs apart from traditional clinical placements and reflects the full mission of PDS work. This paper provides a pair of tools designed to generate discussion about PDS structures, roles, and "signature pedagogy" for PDSs interested in revitalizing or strengthening their partnership work.

NAPDS Essential(s) Addressed: #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; #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.

Introduction

An important part of Professional Development School (PDS) work is encouraging collaborative reflection within a partnership community (NAPDS Essentials 4 and 7, 2008; NCATE PDS Standards 1 and 3, 2001) to discuss how the partnership can

continue to move toward actualizing the full mission of a PDS. Change and growth within partnerships require participants to engage in collaborative thinking that leads to goal-setting in order to initiate on-going development. This goal-setting process strengthens as stakeholders engage in both *possibility* and *practicality thinking* (Michalko, 2011). *Possibility thinking* includes a review of ideas, without judgment or evaluation of any kind. The strategy is used to generate as many ideas related to a particular phenomenon or concept, obvious and novel, as possible, without criticism or shortcomings. *Practicality thinking* is a way of then reviewing those ideas to determine which ideas to explore and how an idea might be made feasible within a particular context at a particular time. This article suggests the importance of professional development school (PDS) stakeholders engaging in both possibility and practicality thinking using a case as an illustration of possibility thinking and a protocol designed to encourage practicality thinking. In combination, these tools encourage collaborative planning for partnership development.

Background and Rationale

While partnerships continue to emerge, many of the initial PDSs are entering their second and third decades of collaboration. As a result, some partnerships are experiencing a need for imagining possibilities, revitalization, and a returned gaze to the initial tenets to stimulate future possibilities of PDS work. Defined as a place where teaching is viewed as a professional practice and where developing the skills and practices of reflection and research become an important value and norm (Levine, 1992, 2002), PDSs are uniquely designed to prepare the next generation of teachers within inquiry-oriented cultures where school and university-based educators work side-by-side to improve learning for all (Holmes, 1986,1990; NAPDS, 2008; NCATE, 2001). Today, PDSs that embrace this purpose

honor these norms of reflection and research by making their successes, future goals, and sustainability dilemmas public within their communities through collaborative dialogue about their existing practices and establishing clear partnership goals. By engaging in these collaborative conversations, PDSs strengthen partnerships by holding themselves accountable for actualizing the roles, structures, and activities that set PDSs apart from traditional teacher education.

As partnerships have matured over the past few decades, we have witnessed a variety of national efforts to more clearly define what a PDS is and articulate standards for quality. For example, the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) PDS Standards (2001) and the National Association of Professional Development Schools (NAPDS) Nine Essentials (2008) have received significant attention by partnerships interested in deepening their work. The NCATE PDS Standards and the NAPDS Nine Essentials serve as important tools for guiding as well as gauging the success of our partnerships. These standards and essentials provide both a metric and a stimulus for development, revitalization, and sustainability efforts.

Recognizing the important contribution PDSs make to clinically-rich teacher education, illustrating what these standards and essentials look like in practice is important to encouraging partnership development that sets PDS teacher education apart from more traditional campus-based teacher preparation. This type of illustration provides a concrete example of what a PDS could look like for those who have not yet begun to imagine the possibilities of what could be. Shulman (2005b) articulates the importance of distinguishing our work in his critique of teacher education:

> We begin with a critique of teacher education that all of us have known for years. It's very hard to learn to practice without powerful, consistent

models of practice that we can study deeply, that we engage with deeply, that we can reflect on deeply, and over which we have some control with regard to quality and character. If you had to design a system to violate all those principles, you would have designed *traditional student teaching*. Every candidate is assigned to a different place; there is enormous uncertainty about what they're going to see, what they're going to do, and how their own learning and performance will be monitored and guided. (Shulman, p. 16)

Given this critique of traditional student teaching, assuring that PDSs are not places of uncertainty but rather contexts that actualize a set of standards, essentials, and activities that set PDSs apart for traditional teacher education seems crucial to the success and sustainability of the PDS movement.

In addition to the NCATE PDS Standards and the NAPDS Nine Essentials, specific approaches or activities for teacher learning are emerging within partnerships characterized as clinically-rich teacher education. Shulman (2005a, 2005b) refers to these approaches or activities as "signature pedagogy." Signature pedagogy refers to a mode of teaching that has become inextricably identified with preparing people for a particular profession (e.g., law, medicine, education) and as a result these pedagogies become distinctive to that profession, pervasive within the curriculum, and cut across courses, programs, and institutions. Thus, the "signature pedagogy" of education is comprised of the learning tools that have become essential to the general pedagogy of our profession, as elements of instruction and socialization. Given that PDSs are contexts for teacher education, illustrating the unique "signature pedagogy" of PDS work, in combination with the essentials and standards, can encourage possibility and practicality thinking.

The Case Illustration and Protocol Tools

In this section, we begin by providing a conceptual framework for the case we detail and the protocol upon which we rely. Second, we detail the process we used to create the case illustration. Next, we introduce the case that serves as the exemplar for a PDS signature pedagogy, which is included in its entirety in the appendix of this article. Finally, we describe how the protocol is used to deconstruct this case illustration.

Conceptual framework. Similar to the work of Ballock (2010) published in *School-University Partnerships*, we emphasize the importance of creating tools such as case illustrations and protocols that encourage partnership dialogue. Many times stakeholders in new partnerships could benefit from having an image of what they are constructing. Other times stakeholders in more mature partnerships benefit from images and examples of how other partnerships are conducting their work. To date, gleaning insight about how other partnerships work is limited to conference presentations or actual site visits, which are both time-consuming and expensive.

In this paper, we offer a less resource intensive, local vehicle to allow PDSs to learn from others through a PDS case illustration, referred to as the Elmwood Case, paired with a protocol that might guide a thorough evaluation and description of this case. In combination, these tools are designed to facilitate possibility and practicality thinking that invites substantive contributions about future growth and development from all PDS participants within a safe, collaborative context. A case illustration is a learning tool differing from the use of case within qualitative research methodology (Boehrer & Linsky, 1990; Christensen & Hansen, 1987; Christensen, Garvin, & Sweet, 1991). Rather than an approach to research, teaching cases have emerged as learning tools within professional schools, including business and law colleges. For instance, cases are used to illustrate scenarios, encourage reflection, and explore a myriad of principles, topics, or issues

relevant to educators (Shulman, 1992). Through such a rich, illustrative example as a case, PDS participants are presented a story or narrative about events that have or could have happened.

Protocols are tools that educators often use to strengthen communication between colleagues as they resolve or explore important dilemmas of practice. McDonald, Mohr, Dichter, and McDonald (2003) explain the importance of using protocols:

> But in the professional education of educators, one could argue that elaborate etiquette, communication precision, faithful replication, and scripts would prove counterproductive here. Don't we best learn from each other by just talking with each other? No, we claim. Among educators especially, just talking may not be enough. The kind of talking needed to educate ourselves cannot rise spontaneously and unaided from just talking. It needs to be carefully planned and scaffolded (McDonald et al., 2003, p. 4).

According to the National School Reform Faculty, protocols create focused, meaningful, and efficient communication, problem-solving, and learning. The protocol generates discussion, understanding, and change. Additionally, protocols encourage teachers to expose fundamental assumptions about their practice, to work together, and to reflect deeply about their own learning (Blythe, Allen & Powell, 1999; McDonald, 2002).

Given the unique characteristics of PDSs as a blended community uniting two distinct organizations, protocols are valuable tools for creating important dialogue and goal-setting within PDS partnerships interested in strengthening their work. Through this type of protocol-facilitated collegial dialogue, PDS stakeholders can collaboratively generate new ideas, expose fundamental assumptions about their practices, work together, and reflect deeply about their own work in relation to the PDS Standards,

Nine Essentials, and "signature pedagogy." In combination, the case illustration and protocol help partnership stakeholders imagine possibilities as well as negotiate the practicalities for partnership work that are essential for actualizing the full mission of PDS and setting PDS apart from traditional teacher education.

Constructing the case illustration. To identify the components included in the Elmwood Case, the authors drew on three data sources. The NAPDS Nine Essentials and the NCATE PDS Standards comprised the first two data sources and these sources typically suggested the structures and roles included in the case illustration. These included but were not limited to examples of boundary-crossing roles, development of professional learning communities, collaborative decision-making, simultaneous renewal, strong communication, innovative practices, shared resources, and systematic inquiry. The third data source included all articles published in *School-University Partnerships* between 2007 and 2010 as well as the abstracts of National Association of Professional Development Schools (NAPDS) conference presentations between 2008 and 2010. An analysis of these sources identified the six types of pedagogical practice that could inform and create conversation about a partnership-based "signature pedagogy" (Franco, et al, 2012). These practices included: (1) integrated course content, assignments, and teaching, (2) observation of teaching by pre-service teachers, (3) mentoring and coaching that include observation of pre-service teachers by other educators, (4) co-teaching, (5) inquiry, and (6) reflection on teaching.

The Elmwood PDS case illustration. The illustrative case that follows reflects the roles, responsibilities, structures, and pedagogy that emerged through the articles reviewed. In developing the case, we have represented these features by drawing on activities that we have observed in action across a number of partnerships. Thus, although this is a synthesis of PDS activities integrated into a single fictional story, it is important to note that these are authentic activities that are happening in some PDSs.

Table 1 summarizes the activities presented in the case illustration and links them to the relevant PDS standard, essential, or "signature pedagogy." Finally, the case, found in Appendix A, is organized into three sections: (1) an introduction that provides a context for the study, (2) a description of the activities occurring each day of a particular week within this PDS, and (3) an exit interview which emphasizes the next steps of the formative review process. The case illustration is to be read by a group of PDS stakeholders and then debriefed using the "Rule of Three" which is a protocol that is adapted from the National School Reform Faculty (2012).

Protocol for Deconstructing the Case

The purpose of developing the Elmwood case illustration was so that university- and school-based stakeholders could engage in *possibility and practicality thinking* (Michalko, 2011) centered on their own PDS work and develop goals for their own future PDS work. Reading the case will help PDS participants think about the many possibilities that PDS teacher education can provide. Next, collaboratively discussing the protocol will promote *practicality thinking* by encouraging partners to plan for the future of their partnership. After reading the Elmwood case, PDS partners might use the protocol to discuss how Elmwood was simultaneously addressing PDS standards, essentials, and the "signature pedagogy" embedded in the story. The protocol that follows is adapted from an instrument created by the National School Reform Faculty (NSRF, 2012) and Camilla Greene's *Rule of 3 Protocol* (2003). The protocol, found in Appendix B, offers a sequence for facilitating a discussion that targets identifying PDS "signature pedagogy" and imagining how "signature pedagogy" could emerge within a partnership and align with the PDS standards (NAPDS, 2008; NCATE, 2001). After reading the case, collaboratively discussing the case

using the protocol would move the dialogue among PDS constituents away from possibility thinking and toward *practicality thinking* by encouraging partners to dialogue about the structures, roles, and activities occurring at Elmwood as well dialogue about future enhancements to their partnership work.

In our use of this case illustration and protocol with groups of PDS stakeholders at both the local level in Florida and West Virginia as well as at national and state conference presentations (e.g., at PDS state conferences and the NAPDS national conference), participants identified the following benefits of this case and protocol. First, those new to partnership work engaged in structured dialogue about possibilities by imagining what their partnership could be. Other more developed partnerships used the protocol to identify missing elements of their own work and to celebrate activities unique to their own partnerships that were not included in the case illustration. Participants who used the protocol identified the importance of imagining possibilities before getting caught up in the resource dilemmas that often emerge as barriers when infusing the structures, roles, and "signature pedagogy" activities. They emphasized the need to decide what is important first and then identify the resources (both human and fiscal) needed to support these activities. Typical responses from discussion participants reflecting on the case using the protocol include:

> The case taught me that before we plan for the year we need to step outside our own partnership for a moment and hear about the kinds of work other partnerships are doing. We can learn from a case like this without even leaving the table. The ideas helped us think about things our partnership could do to enact the PDS goals that we hadn't thought of before. We also discussed ideas that weren't even in the case but resulted because we had time to dream a bit.

Table 1.   Examples from Elmwood Case Illustration aligned with Signature Pedagogy, NAPDS Essential, and NCATE Standard

Examples	Signature Pedagogy	NAPDS 9 Essential	NCATE PDS Standard
Securing funding - foundation, state, district and/or university		Essential 9	Standard 5
Formative assessment – including on-going data collection by numerous stakeholders			Standard 2
High level of principal involvement and knowledge		Essential 8	Standard 5
Attention to PDS standards and essentials		Essential 1	Standard 2
Making PDS work feel part of the daily work rather than be perceived as an add-on		Essential 1	Standard 1
Distributed leadership across partnership stakeholders		Essential 8	Standard 5
Shared vision, mission, and goals are developed and articulate to stakeholders		Essential 1	Standard 3
Co-teaching with university faculty, pre-service teachers, and/or mentors teachers	X	Essential 2	Standard 1
Whole school is committed to being a PDS, not just a subset of teachers		Essential 1	Standard 5
Conducting teacher research to study progress using multiple forms of data	X	Essential 5	Standard 1
Mentoring pre-service and beginning teachers	X	Essential 2	Standard 1
Observation classrooms for reflective practice and to share evidence based practices	X	Essential 2	Standard 1
Teachers working with district curriculum staff and university colleagues to explore new innovations in instruction as well as negotiate ongoing tensions that arise		Essential 8	Standard 5
PDS work is strategically tied to school improvement goals to improve student learning		Essential 4	Standard 5
Simultaneous renewal of K-12 and teacher education programs		Essential 4	Standard 3
Organizational support from all levels of leadership on both sides of partnership (e.g., dean, superintendent, principals) paired with written agreement of roles and responsibilities are tightly coupled and aligned with PDS goals		Essential 6	Standard 5
Mutual respect for each others' knowledge		Essential 8	Standard 5
Collaborative Inquiry where dilemmas are studied together by all stakeholders	X	Essential 4	Standard 1
Teaching rounds	X	Essential 2	Standard 1
Research in action observations/structures – Model school for site visits	X	Essential 2	Standard 1
Integrated coursework and field work	X	Essential 2	Standard 1
Dedicated onsite space for meeting		Essential 9	Standard 5
Shared responsibility for coaching and evaluating intern learning		Essential 8	Standard 3
Aligned instructional innovation such as technology integration, differentiated instruction, RtI, evidence based practices, data based decision making, & global/international collaboration		Essential 5	Standard 3 Standard 4
Onsite job-embedded professional development (i.e., lesson study, PLCs, release time)		Essential 3	Standard 1
School-wide action research (e.g., IPI)	X	Essential 4	Standard 1
Regularly scheduled partnership meetings		Essential 7	Standard 5
Expanded or boundary spanning roles support partnership (e.g., teacher education coordinator, professional development coordinator, Faculty in Residence)		Essential 8	Standard 5
Publically sharing the PDS work (e.g., conference presentations, local venues, journals)		Essential 5	Standard 1

The case also allowed us to point out and discuss conditions of our own partnership that we needed to strengthen. One of the unexpected responses was our realization that we could braid resources from across the partnership to make many of these kinds of activities occur. (Shared during debriefing protocol, participant from WVPTQ Meeting, March, 2010)

Partnerships benefit from hearing the work of other partnerships—an activity that typically occurs at conferences or visits to other partnerships—and our experience with pairing cases with protocols in such conversations and presentations suggest that this structure facilitates discussions that provide a much more efficient window into the structures, roles, and "signature pedagogy" of other partnerships.

Although the case and protocol combination can be a powerful tool for collaborative learning and planning, prerequisite conditions help partnerships profit from this type of discussion. First, the partnership must be rooted firmly in a culture of collaboration and this belief in collaboration is facilitated by the commitment of both organizations to the partnership itself. Second, partners must be open to and interested in learning from other partnerships simultaneously while regularly examining their own activities to ensure that the activities are transformative and generative. This stance toward PDS work requires partners who come together to work on shared goals to generate new, common understandings. Collaborative partnerships require ongoing attention if they are to identify, develop, and sustain the structures, roles, and "signature pedagogy" of PDS work as collaborative partnerships are complex, tricky to navigate, and difficult to sustain. Therefore, this case and protocol can serve a critical purpose in focusing or re-focusing PDS stakeholders on actualizing the essentials and standards in their practices as well as embedding emerging research-based "signature pedagogies" in their work with pre-service teachers.

Discussion

The Elmwood Case Illustration and the Rule of 3 Protocol encourage PDSs to engage in discussions about establishing or deepening the roles and structures that are emphasized in the standards and essentials as well as "signature pedagogy" used for our clinically-rich teacher education. The process of using the case and protocol creates opportunities for both possibility thinking and practicality thinking necessary for innovation in any organization. Many times partners can get stuck in the practicalities of their work, limiting the possibilities. The case and protocol combination fights against "either or" thinking by encouraging *both* possibility and practicality thinking as partners engage in collaborative reflective dialogue about their work, giving attention to the full mission of PDS as expressed in the standards and essentials. They also address Shulman's call for identifying a "signature pedagogy" of teaching that is inextricably identified with preparing teachers within a PDS that reflects preparation that is distinctive, pervasive, and cuts across partnerships. Identifying these unique features will set PDS teacher education apart from traditional teacher education.

This case illustration depicts an extremely sophisticated and fine-tuned partnership that integrates many of the essentials, standards, and "signature pedagogy" targeted at enhancing professional learning for administrators and teachers, prospective teachers, university faculty, and K-12 students. By developing this exemplary case, comprised of a variety of professional activities, we create an illustration powerful enough to create dissonance for many partnerships. This dissonance has the power to disrupt the status quo of a local PDS. By weaving together a story to illustrate some of the possibilities of how PDSs can

function, we can illustrate the possibility of PDS to other partnerships without even leaving the local context. Other extensions of the case illustration and protocol work could include partnerships writing their own case illustrations and exchanging these illustrations with other partnerships to generate dialogue. Additionally, in lieu of using the Elmwood Case, partnership stakeholders could read the articles in *School-University Partnerships* written to summarize the work of the recipients of the NAPDS Exemplary PDS Achievement Award and use the protocols to discuss the exemplary work of a recognized partnership. Like the Teachers Network Leadership Institute's (TNLI) (2012) *Making the Case* approach to facilitating reform, we have also found cases useful in helping funders imagine the goals partnerships are reaching toward as well as with assisting superintendents, school board members, and other educational leaders to imagine the possibilities of collaboration.

The use of this protocol and case illustration can also be used by sets of PDS constituents to assess the degree to which "second order" change—as opposed to "first order" change—is actually occurring in their partnerships and institutions. Fullan (2001) distinguishes between these two types of change as first order change refers to incremental change that fine-tunes a system through small steps. These steps do not radically differ from the way things were done in the past.

As innovative organizations, PDSs require second order change which is much more transformative. Second order change involves dramatic departures from the traditional way of working and includes using new ways of defining problems and arriving at solutions. Many times partnerships will have structures, roles, and pedagogy in place that have not truly required or actualized transformation. Finally, it is important to note that this case illustration provides a tool for helping PDS meet the challenge posed by the NCATE Blue Ribbon Report (2010) which upped the ante

for teacher education programs to develop clinically-rich teacher education practices that include multiple opportunities for pre-service teachers to participate in robust field experiences in collaboration with school-based partners.

For those who have the necessary commitment and prerequisite collaborative partnership conditions, the power of using case illustrations paired with protocols to strengthen dialogue and goal-setting related to the essentials and standards as well as establishing "signature pedagogy" is evident. Such processes are especially important now as the attack on teacher education heightens across the nation and too little attention is being given to the PDS movement that began over two decades ago. As the stakes for teacher education have been raised, it is critical that PDS-based teacher education programs demonstrate the benefits of clinically-rich teacher education to policy makers and educational leaders. We need to push forward to actualize the challenging essentials, standards, and "signature pedagogy" that showcase the benefits of PDS for others to see and set our work apart from Shulman's critique of traditional student teaching. This article offers one way to strengthen that collaborative conversation within local partnerships. ▪ SUP

Appendix A

The Elmwood PDS Case Illustration

Directions:

Read the case illustration. As you read, consider the following questions and jot notes related to the questions and other thoughts that emerge in the margins of the pages.

- What structures, roles, activities were occurring at Elmwood?
- How do these activities connect or disconnect to the NCATE PDS Standards and the NAPDS Nine Essentials?

Introduction

Elmwood Elementary School is a PDS school within a network of 12 PDS sites working in partnership with a research-intensive university located in a suburban context. The members of the partnership had just completed their seventh year of working together. During this week, Elmwood awaited a visitor from a foundation who had provided funding for their initial work[1] and the stakeholders were looking forward to sharing their successes with him.

A Week at Elmwood Elementary

After greeting Jim Denver, a representative from a foundation supporting PDS work, in the school office, principal Larry Russell and Jim found a seat at the table in Larry's office. It was Monday morning and Larry was enthusiastic about having Jim at his school this week to learn about Elmwood's partnership progress. Jim's role as the foundation's project manager was to learn more about the strengths and weaknesses of the Elmwood work and encourage the formative evaluation process that this PDS engaged in regularly to encourage on-going improvement. As a representative from the foundation, Jim encouraged on-going attention to actualizing the standards and essentials. Larry knew that both foundation and state/university financial support required attention to these standards and elements if these partnerships wanted continued support.

Larry and Jim began by discussing the work of Elmwood as a PDS. Knowing the critical role the principal plays in a PDS, Larry was keenly aware of the NAPDS Nine Essentials as well as the NCATE PDS Standards and knew how these standards were embedded in the daily work of his school. By the end of the week Jim would see how the PDS standards had become components of Elmwood's school culture, making the PDS feel a part of the daily work of all educators rather than be perceived as an add-on to activities associated with already demanding accountability high stakes standards. For instance, Larry used distributed leadership within his school community by incorporating university faculty, graduate students, and teachers in PDS leadership activities through boundary-spanning roles to support the partnership efforts.

Larry explained, "I know we are excellent because as a part of being a PDS, we regularly study our strengths and weaknesses using multiple data types. I believe this has contributed to our improved state test scores. As a part of our partnership work, we have explicitly made Response to Intervention (RtI) one of our shared goals to ensure that all students learn. I believe that we are really becoming a model school for RtI and this is evident in our rising test scores for struggling students, changes in student work, enhanced knowledge of our professional staff, the documented repertoire of tools that our PDS graduates possess to support student learning and the fact that we have many people from around the district and state making site visits to our school."

Jim asked, "How many teachers and prospective teachers do you have working with you at Elmwood?"

"Well, we have a staff of 34 teachers and 425 PK-grade 5 students in this Title 1 school. Additionally, we have eight Level 1 practicum students (eight hours/week), eight Level 2 practicum students (sixteen hours spread across four half days per week), and eight full-time PDS interns. That gives us 48 extra hands each week to deliver the differentiated curriculum to diverse student learners. The pre-service teachers are not all here at the same time but they do overlap for at least three hours one day per week. That is important time when we have everyone on board. The prospective teachers often co-teach in classrooms so we really only need twelve mentors each semester," Larry answered. He continues, "We do rotate the mentors each year as we have a good problem: we have more mentors that want to work with pre-service teachers than we have in the pool of these novice teachers. This was not always the case—when we started as a PDS getting enough mentors to willingly participate was problematic."

[1] Note: Underlined text in the case indicates an example from or a connection to the NAPDS Nine Essentials (2001), the NCATE PDs Standards (2001), or PDS Signature Pedagogy (Franco, et al, 2012). See Table 1 for details.

Next Jim inquired, "You know, I always ask what makes this PDS different from a really good school? Some folks have a hard time making that distinction."

Larry responds, "Well, first of all, our whole school is a PDS and a part of being a PDS is a commitment to everyone being involved in pre-service and in-service teacher learning. It is not just a group of host teachers who work with novice teachers or two or three faculty who do the majority of the work. Everyone has a role to play in PDS. Sometimes teachers serve as mentor teachers where they work directly with novice teachers and collaborate on teacher research. Other faculty serve, for example, as teacher research coaches or offer their classroom as observation sites for best practices. These observation classrooms are often the result of teachers working with district curriculum folks and university colleagues to explore new innovations in instruction. We do something called lesson study here, which is a process of collaboratively planning, implementing, and studying specific lessons. This is exciting as everyone has expertise to bring to the table in these observation classrooms. The bottom line is everyone is focused on student learning. They just approach learning from different angles."

"As principal, I am really more of a facilitator as I try and 'glue' ideas, resources, and solutions together to accomplish our school's goals and teacher education goals. For example, I work with our leadership team to nurture and broker relationships between university faculty, district curriculum support efforts, and my faculty as we work on specific school improvement efforts. This facilitation is important as it connects our work to the county and allows us to share our findings and new practices with other schools in the county and merge our work with state initiatives. Throughout our school, our 24 novice teachers are integrated into the daily work we do for children. Right now, their specific work focuses in some way on RtI. You can see this in our strategic plan, as we have been clear to tightly couple and align the work of the interns with our school goals. I don't know what we would do without the pre-service teachers; we really

count on the contributions they make each year to learning, both student and professional, at our school. What is really exciting is that the teachers don't see the partnership or teacher education responsibilities as a burden but rather a resource—more hands in the classrooms to help our students. We have really seen a shift toward small group and differentiated instruction because we have these extra human resources."

Larry continues, "Even our facilities staff are a part of our PDS work. They provide input into our school improvement efforts as well as work with the novice teachers to better help them understand the nuts and bolts of running a school. We even have some service staff supporting struggling learners by adopting reading buddies. Everyone always told me when I first started teaching that I needed to know the woman that runs the cafeteria and the custodian. They were right."

Jim nods his head as if he is beginning to understand and then Larry continues, "I guess much of this you could do in a non-PDS, too. A real difference in our school is that we have created strong professional relationships that cut across institutional boundaries. These took some time to develop. Our superintendent as well as the dean of the college and the university's department chairs have really created this way of working together. They have done this by bringing people together, thinking creatively about how to share resources, and gaining support from both the school community and the broader community. The PDS network is not a we/they thing anymore like a lot of university towns where you find more of a town/gown feeling. We have a real respect for each other's knowledge and we know that we need to work together to really solve the problems of education today."

Larry pointed to the board on the wall, "Jim, as you can see from this list and meeting schedule, we work with each other each day in an integrated way on our shared problems. Sometimes the school faculty and university teacher educators are physically together in the same meeting. Other times we are using technology like Skype or GOTO meeting to

collaborate. We bring a team together and figure out a plan. Together the school staff and university representatives <u>attack the dilemma together and study the process together</u>. We each have important expertise to bring to the table. Sometimes we actually create knowledge and expertise together. The university does bring a <u>focus on research</u> that we often don't have time for in non-PDS contexts. We have a lot of data here but <u>using data</u> well requires a set of skills that we have now developed as a result of support from our university partners. This is a contribution that makes our PDS feel different than a 'good' school or even a school that takes a lot of novice teachers for field experiences."

Larry adds, "You know the partnership isn't without problems. When we first began our heads were spinning. We got mandates, directions, and meetings from central office and the state to do one thing. The university teacher education program had other ideas that didn't necessarily fit with the state mandates. Then, we had grassroots, make-a-difference type conversations going on at the school as a part of the PDS work and sometimes the university and district perspectives collided around curriculum and instructional practices. <u>We needed support from the county office and the university to provide us flexibility to negotiate tensions at the partnership level</u> and eventually we identified a <u>way to integrate our instructional work</u> rather than have it compete for our time."

Jim probes, "Well, I knew Elmwood has a great reputation. Can you tell me a little more about the depth of your partnership with the university faculty?"

Larry responds, "Sure, we see our <u>Faculty in Residence</u> who is a university literacy faculty member at least once a week. Her name is Cathy. She spends a whole day with us. Part of the day she is <u>co-teaching</u> university students on site with various teachers from our building. She also works with coaches and teacher leaders as they collaboratively conduct <u>rounds</u> focused on struggling students. These rounds are formal meetings during which teacher leaders, novice teachers, university faculty, and specialists observe, review data, and discuss a student or group of students' learning situation. Much like

medical training this is a part of their on-site training wherein new professional knowledge is both taught and created as data is collaboratively explored and targeted instruction is identified and implemented. The process <u>strengthens instructional decision-making and our ability to use data</u>. These diagnostic and intervention skills are essential to strengthening our educational practice. Here the special education teacher is also integrally involved since rounds have become a part of our RtI work. Teaching rounds today are integral to our PDS work as they present clinical problems by focusing on current puzzling cases. These rounds specifically involve looking at data, identifying appropriate interventions, implementing the intervention and then systematically studying student learning to determine impact. I am a big believer in <u>providing ongoing job -professional development opportunities</u>. For example, <u>rounds</u> offer a range of clinically-relevant, educational topics for a generalized audience of pre-service teachers, graduate students, university faculty, and my school faculty. Most importantly, they make a difference in the quality of diagnostic attention the children in my school receive."

Larry continues with enthusiasm, "We also have other university faculty who move in and out of the building based on our needs and their area of expertise. For example, we needed to implement a new math curriculum to support students who were not making progress. Our district and university folks worked together with teachers to pilot and, eventually, demonstrate implementation of this curriculum to other schools who visited with us. These <u>observation classrooms</u> really demonstrate concretely how we are different from non-PDS schools.

We now have regularly scheduled days each month where educators from other schools in the district and around the state visit to observe <u>Research in Action</u>. The visitors will arrive in the morning and meet with the teachers for about an hour to discuss the theoretical and conceptual ideas that underpin the curriculum innovations. They also discuss "look-fors" that are important for implementation. At the conclusion of the morning meeting, the visitors

are given an observation schedule and they move from classroom to classroom on their own, recording what they are learning and identifying questions to be clarified during the debriefing opportunities. At lunchtime, the group gets back together to prepare for the afternoon observation period. Again, new "look-fors" are established by the group. After school, the group meets one last time, reviews the observation data, explores questions and dilemmas that might emerge as they move the work back to their own contexts. These Research in Action Days are exciting for all of us as these are days that we really recognize the progress we are making, and in the process of sharing we continue to learn and this re-energizes us."

Larry continues, "Well, you must be tired of hearing me talk. Are you ready to begin your tour of the school?" Jim nodded and he began his week-long visit of Elmwood Professional Development School.

Monday. In the professional development room, located near the office, a group of 25 prospective teachers comprised of pre-service teachers from Elmwood and three other nearby schools are working with the university literacy faculty member and the school's reading specialist to conduct a literacy course and investigate research-based practices designed to enhance reading comprehension. Larry explains, "These students will spend a part of their time learning about literacy theory and instructional strategies in this integrated fieldwork and coursework class. They then move to the classrooms to implement the strategies and systematically collect data to determine the degree of student learning. The teachers in the PDSs are aware of these data collection tools as well and are able to support the classroom-level strategy implementation and systematic data collection for which the prospective teachers are responsible."

He continues, "An outcome of this work is that it has not only created exemplary new teachers but it has kept my reading specialist and faculty up on the latest evidence-based practices, allowed the university faculty to understand the challenges we face in schools, and created a common repertoire of instruc-tional strategies across the school." He continues, "The most difficult part of this is trying to make sure I can find a place for the students to meet in the school each week. Space is always tough to find and I have worked hard with our central office to protect this important space."

Walking down the hall, Larry and Jim enter a 5th grade language arts classroom where 3rd year prospective teachers are working in the back of the room delivering reinforcement and enrichment to a small group of students as a part of the RtI efforts. Although mentor teachers typically plan these lessons, the prospective teachers keep a journal each day that communicates the progress made by each student they are working with during their tutoring session as well as reflection on their own teaching. Larry explains, "Sometimes the tutors deliver the targeted instruction and at other times the mentor teacher does. This depends on the topic and the mentor's best judgment of what will be good for the students."

Jim and Larry walk further down the hall to one of the science classrooms. Larry points out that the intern and mentor teacher are co-teaching the science lesson using parallel teaching which allows each pre-service teacher to teach the same lesson at the same time but to a different group of students. This gives the elementary students a chance for more engaged and interactive instruction since the teacher-to-student ratio decreases. The inquiry-based science project on which they are working requires initial content area reading mini-lessons focused on vocabulary development followed by collecting and sharing environmental data with three other schools located around the world. Larry explains, "The partner schools are in Brazil and South Africa. We are really trying to use communication technology to give our children the chance to create a global perspective in our students, prospective teachers, and faculty. You can imagine the challenge! We are committed to making student learning engaging."

Jim asked, "How does the planning work so that the novices really learn how to teach?" Larry responds, "Our mentors really understand the idea of scaffolding our pre-service teachers'

learning. Early in the year, the mentor directs the planning of the parallel teaching but over time the intern becomes primarily responsible for initiating the planning of the co-taught lessons." He continues, "By the way, as the mentors scaffold and coach, one of my responsibilities as a principal is also to <u>observe and provide feedback to interns</u>. Yesterday, I observed an intern teaching. She used a variety of new technology tools that really led to more student engagement and deeper understanding of some complex ideas. She told me after the observation when we were post-conferencing that she would work with one of the other interns to provide an after school technology workshop for interested faculty. They also agreed to follow up the workshop with some co-teaching with the faculty members as they implement the technology for the first time in their classes. As you can see, the <u>interns become a professional development resource</u> as well."

Jim and Larry moved on down the hallway to observe a mathematics lesson, where an intern was teaching <u>using the interactive Smartboard</u> while the mentor was working with two student dyads in the back of the room, providing enrichment to one group and re-teaching to another group. Larry explained, "A unique feature of prospective teacher work in a professional development school is the <u>co-teaching</u> experiences that allow students in our public school classrooms to have <u>more 'hands' available for supporting differentiated instruction</u>."

By the time Larry and Jim arrived in the 4th grade wing, two prospective teachers were <u>co-teaching</u> a language arts class comprised of general and special education students. The mentor teacher was working with a single student in the back of the room on reinforcement activities while the interns were brainstorming ideas for persuasive writing with the class. Jim, impressed with the wise use of human resources, noted, "You sure don't waste a moment for learning in these classes."

Larry said, "Let's visit one more classroom across the hall." Jim and Larry stepped into a Chinese Language classroom. Larry explained, "Chinese is a new offering at the school made possible by an <u>international exchange</u> the school and the language department at the university has with a Chinese university. During one semester a year, we have exchanged some of the university's language department graduate students and faculty for two Chinese educators who are teaching Chinese for us here. We sent a <u>study team comprised of school and university faculty</u> to China one summer as a part of this exchange. We learned a great deal about mathematics pedagogy while we were visiting in China as well as ways Chinese schools approach healthy physical self-care. We are really opening up the world through these kinds of international experiences and it helps us realize the importance of looking at new ways to view the things we do."

Tuesday. Jim and Larry meet in the office again on Tuesday morning. Today, Larry brings Jim back to the professional development room. Larry introduced Jim to the gathered group of individuals and explained, "This is the school literacy team and they are reviewing student engagement data. This team is comprised of teachers, administrators, prospective teachers, and university faculty. They collected this data using an observation instrument called the Instructional Practice Inventory (IPI) with student focus groups that the prospective teachers led. We use a <u>regularly scheduled pool of substitutes to release the classroom teachers</u> from their classroom responsibilities to participate in this <u>action research focused professional learning community</u>. This group then moves out to their teams and engages them in similar work during their shared planning time. We have worked hard to create a shared planning period every day for our teams. We can't put pressure on them to increase student learning and not provide the time for their own learning. I believe in pressure paired with an equal amount of support."

As the day ended, Larry asked Jim what he thought of what he had seen that day. Jim responded, "I was impressed as the group collaboratively reviewed student data, identified appropriate interventions, and then assigned tasks to the pre-service teachers—based on their

level of experience at the school—to address the student needs."

Wednesday. Jim arrived at the school on Wednesday afternoon after meeting with the district staff and superintendent. The meetings at <u>central office</u> were important as he knew that the professional development schools would not work well if they were not well integrated into the district's structure and strategic initiatives and plan. During Jim's visit to the central office, he was able to review the <u>written agreements and documentation</u> about the partnership as well as talk with the <u>central office curriculum team who explained how the PDS supported their work with other schools in the district</u>. The final bell rang just as Larry and Jim greeted one another. Larry wanted Jim to see the commitment of the school to teacher preparation and so he took him to the planning room.

Larry began, "<u>Each month the mentor team meets</u> to systematically study and improve our work as mentors of prospective teachers." Light refreshments were on the table and the group was chatting informally as Larry and Jim entered the room. The <u>teacher education coordinator</u>, a teacher selected from the school to facilitate the pre-service teachers' experiences, greeted Jim and explained, "The mentors, university faculty, coaches, and I meet each month to discuss individual prospective teacher progress, identify school-based seminar topics based on educational dilemmas the prospective teachers are experiencing, and plan future observations. Today we are also discussing an article focused on helping struggling interns. We really believe it is our collective responsibility to raise the next generation of teachers, and each prospective teacher has unique professional needs."

Thursday. On Thursday, Jim found himself wandering around the school alone. When he entered the media center he found one of the state department of education staff members, Jessica, discussing a professional development effort that was being planned by the state with Johnna, the <u>professional development coordinator</u> at the school. This conversation was focused on the <u>importance of providing support to both prospective and practicing teachers</u> in the use of data—an important activity given the increasing

expectations that teachers make data-driven decisions. Jessica explained, "I am really pleased that the state is looking for feedback on the professional development policies and plans so that we can <u>collaboratively create a powerful learning opportunity</u>. Johnna continued, "I do believe that our faculty contributes to how both <u>professional development</u> and <u>policy</u> is built at the school, district, and state level. This is something that a professional development school can really help with. I know our professional development focused on educators' use of data will improve because we are able to provide insight into our professional needs."

Later that day, Jim found a university faculty member working with a group of teachers during their planning period on their NAPDS conference <u>presentation and a manuscript</u> that a sub-group of these educators were submitting to the *Journal of Staff Development*. This group had <u>systematically studied</u> the role that Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) had played in their school with particular attention to the understandings that the novice teachers created as a result of being included in the PLCs.

Friday. Jim began his morning by joining the university faculty member responsible for the university's social studies methods course and a team of five elementary teachers comprised of a district office curriculum coach and classroom teachers. They had <u>release time</u> provided by a substitutes and were planning a workshop for the following summer for the social studies teachers in the district. The workshop would have the participants' focus on their state social studies standards implementation as well as the university social studies course development. The course team created the opportunity for <u>instructional reform in both the elementary school and the university classroom</u>. After the meeting was over, Jim exclaimed, "I now see how the teacher education coursework and the classroom practice maintains a degree of alignment here. Do you do this with each subject area? There is real attention to theory and practice integration in your work."

Later that afternoon, the <u>PDS site team</u> gathered to discuss the PDS work for the next month. This group met monthly and was

comprised of the principal, assistant principal, coaches, university faculty, teachers, and a district office representative. Jim was fascinated about how the group seemed to be able to integrate all the school initiatives in a way that brought alignment and coherence to their focus. Even with many partners working together, they were able to align goals and resources so that the PDS work felt *a part of* rather than *apart from* their daily work of improving teaching and learning.

Exit Conversation. On Friday afternoon, Larry and Jim gathered again in Larry's office. Larry shared, "I am so glad you were able to spend the week with us. We are very proud of our efforts to become an RtI site for inquiry and innovation. Next year, we are hoping to move our work toward strengthening our integration of technology to support all learners. I hope you can identify the work we do to actualize the PDS mission."

Jim nodded, "I am really impressed with the dedication of your staff to the PDS initiative. There is much evidence that you are moving well beyond the first PDS goal of enhanced teacher preparation. How do you get buy in from faculty?

Larry responds, "At first it took a lot of vision setting and team building. We really had to re-shape teachers' thinking to not just be teachers of children but also teachers of teachers. We started small and added one teacher at a time. Those who watched at first and saw success wanted to participate as time progressed. Today, they have really assumed the role of teacher as teacher educator. They really feel like they are contributing to the next generation of teachers. I will admit though, when I interview new people for faculty positions in the school, I explain to them that if they assume a teaching position here that embracing and participating in the PDS is an expectation."

Jim spent the final hour sharing the formative data that he had collected from his observations with the PDS community. He clarified and answered questions. The group then engaged in preliminary dialogue about the formative and emerging findings. As Jim concluded he said, "I am struck by the work

going on and the commitment of your school, district, and local university to working together to improve student learning. Everyone seems to be making significant contributions towards common goals. What are your dilemmas, what can you do about them, and how can I help?"

Appendix B

The Rule of Three Protocol

Process:

1. Sit in a circle and identify a facilitator/timekeeper. The facilitator assumes the role of timekeeper and adheres to the time limits.
2. Have your participants scan the discussion questions below and read the text (Elmwood Case). While reading participants identify passages (and a couple of back-ups) that they feel may have important implications for the local PDS work.
3. Break your participants into groups of 4–5.
4. Begin a Round. Have each participant in your group share responses to level 1, 2, and 3 below. A Round consists of one person using up to 3 minutes to respond to each level of sharing and reflection:

    Level 1: Read aloud the passage she/he has selected
    Level 2: Say what she/he thinks about the passage related to the local PDS work
    Level 3: Say what she/he sees as the implications for the local PDS work

5. The group responds (for a total of up to 2 minutes) to what has been shared.
6. Complete 1 – 3 rounds.
7. After all rounds have been completed, bring all the groups together. Identify

questions from the following list to discuss.

a. What activities or "signature pedagogy" were occurring at Elmwood that are different from a *really good school?*

b. How do these activities connect to or disconnect from the NCATE PDS Standards and the NAPDS Nine Essentials? Be specific.

c. What is exciting about this type of learning environment for public school students, teachers, administrators, university faculty, county administrators, other county schools, state, and regional offices, and prospective teachers? Be sure to explore this question from each perspective.

d. What might be scary or difficult about this type of learning environment for public school students, teachers, administrators, university faculty, county administrators, other county schools, state and regional education offices, and prospective teachers? Be sure to explore this question from each perspective.

e. Was there any part of the case that did not directly influence the quality of student learning? If so what? How?

f. After reading the case and sharing, what kinds of PDS activities might you introduce to your school?

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