

Advancing Professional Development School Research: Reflections and Perspectives From PDS Leaders

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ABSTRACT: Recently, NAPDS and the PDS Research Special Interest Group of the American Educational Research Association formed a collaborative to create a new position titled Research Relations Liaison. The new collaboration and position is a vehicle for strengthening the connection between the two entities, advancing PDS Research and elevating it to a national level. In operationalizing this new collaboration and position, a joint symposium for crafting a collaborative future for improving PDS Research was conducted at the 2018 NAPDS National Conference by past presidents followed by a Future's Panel presentation by former SIG chairs at the 2018 AERA. As recognized PDS leaders, the panelists were asked to reflect on the past and present their perspectives for advancing PDS Research. In this article, the panelists, turned authors, collaborate to put forth their reflections on their leadership years and present their views on and for advancing PDS Research for the next-generation of PDS practitioners and researchers.

NAPDS 9 Essentials Addressed: 5. Engagement in and public sharing of the results of deliberate investigations of practice by respective participants.

At the 2018 Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (AERA), the Professional Development School Research (PDSR), Special Interest Group (SIG) held a different kind of event at its Business Meeting. In addition to the presentations of the SIG's Teacher Researcher Awards, much of the two-hour session was devoted to a lively panel and audience discussion focused primarily on advancing PDS Research. Referred to and advertised as the Future's Panel, past Chairs from the earlier years of the SIG and a guest SIG historian were all invited to serve on the panel. As known leaders in the field of PDS, and in the SIG and NAPDS, each panelist was asked to reflect on the past and provide their views or perspectives for advancing PDS Research. What followed the presentations was a lively interactive dialog with members of the audience moderated by the 2017-2018 Chair of the SIG.

The audience that night was made up of SIG members, and PDS teachers and principals, many of whom were also members of the NAPDS. Also present was the Research Relations Liaison who represented the newly formed collaboration between the PDSR SIG and the NAPDS. By the end of the evening, many members of the audience were energized by the presentations and lively discussion. They requested that the panelists' presentations be documented in a publication so that their valuable thoughts, reflections, and viewpoints could be recorded and disseminated to a wider audience of scholars and practitioners, and to members of both organizations who were not present that night. Accordingly, this article focuses mainly on the topic of advancing PDS Research as seen by members of

the Future's Panel. The panelists and moderator, turned authors, share their reflections, and their extended thoughts and views on the topic. As a collaborative group of authors our intent is to contribute to the current dialog on the future and improvement of PDS Research, and on the next generation of research for elevating the PDS mission and field. We begin with a brief history of the PDSR SIG by Alison Rutter, highlighting six significant events or persons from the 1990s to 2018, trailed by her thoughts for advancing PDS Research and then followed by each panelist's presentation. We end with a summative section that looks across the five panelists' insights and a final unifying comment.

Historical View of the PDSR SIG of the AERA (circa 1990s – 2018)

Like other SIGs within AERA, the PDSR SIG was created as a response to a new area of research interest that did not fit neatly into one of the Divisions or its sub-sections, nor match up exactly with an existing SIG. While Division K (Teaching and Teacher Education) continues to receive proposals for PDS Research for its section on School Contexts, this one section does not meet the specific nature of PDS as a phenomenon broader than just a "context." PDS Research includes research on PDS and *within* PDS. PDS by its nature is a very specific relationship between schools and universities, which sometimes also includes related unions or community efforts. The research could be looking at something related to the IHE (Institutions of

Higher Education) side of the partnership, the P-12 school, or the “third space” in between (Holmes Group, 1990, p. 7). It could also be looking at the configuration and curriculum presented as a component of teacher education, the effects of the partnership on new teachers, existing veteran teachers, or the student achievement within the PDS. It is a broad, yet specific research area. Even after gaining SIG status, confusion continues. As one of the early Program Chairs, I frequently received proposals from those researching “professional development,” “professions,” some general school interests such as technology, and sometimes those better served by the AERA’s School University Collaborative Research SIG, which typically looks at very specific interventions. Despite the confusion, the PDSR SIG became *the* place to present current scholarly empirical research related to PDSs by those who understood what one was.

The PDSR SIG was formed following the publication of the Holmes Group trilogy (1), *Tomorrow’s Teachers* (1986), *Tomorrow’s Schools* (1990), and *Tomorrow’s Schools of Education* (1995). Given the support of many of the major “Research 1” universities through these reports and major research organizations providing grants to research this new area, the SIG was a necessary outlet to focus this new research. In the early years, membership hovered near 100 members and was granted a number of roundtables, a few paper sessions, and a business meeting to corral the burgeoning interest area. Lee Teitel, one of the early PDS researchers and author of the *Professional Development Schools Handbook*, was one of the first Chairs (2) who helped guide the new SIG. Janice Nath, co-editor of one of the important series of PDS works, titled *Research in Professional Development Schools*, also chaired the SIG in the early years (3), helping to anchor it as a necessary voice for early PDS Research. By the new millennium, a new cadre of researchers took interest in PDS Research.

The National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) had developed the PDS Standards to assess PDS progress and Holmes had dispersed its once central interest to regional entities. Under the guidance of a series of Chairs – Jeanne Tunks, Jane Neapolitan, and Diane Yendol-Hoppey – the SIG expanded its mission to include dissertations, the presentation of a Dissertation Award, and a Doctoral Seminar (4) to encourage doctoral students to further research on some aspect of PDS and become active as new researchers. In doing so, it offered mentoring seminars to these new researchers by experienced faculty similar to the ones offered by the Divisions. It also offered workshops with leading PDS figures such as Lee Teitel and Marsha Levine to help those new to PDS, set up their PDS and use the new NCATE PDS Standards to encourage all PDS growth. The SIG also created the Claudia A. Balach Award for outstanding PDS Research conducted collaboratively by PDS partners from both the school and university (5).

As PDS expanded and the new NAPDS was created in 2005, the PDSR SIG sought ways to brand its own research identity and also encourage crossover between the two organizations. SIG Chairs Kristien Zenkov, Eva Garin, Rebecca

Burns, Susan Ogletree, and Gwen Benson have served in various leadership capacities in both organizations, as have SIG Program Chairs Bernard Badiali and me. Also, in 2008 I served as President of the NAPDS until 2010. Most recently in 2018 this crossover of leaders has led to a true bridging of the organizations with the new NAPDS-PDSR SIG/AERA Liaison position (6), discussed later in the article. Each of the six highlighted events or landmarks has significantly contributed to development of the SIG.

Throughout the two-decade existence of the SIG’s history, many researchers established themselves as leaders in this area, thanks to the SIG. For example, researchers such as Castle and her associates (Castle, Arends et al. 2008; Castle, Rockwood et al., 2008), and William Curlette and his colleagues at Georgia State University (2011, 2014) became known leaders. These researchers and others have focused their empirical work on enhancing student learning through the improvement of teachers, schools, and teacher education via the partnerships. The SIG has helped to breed new researchers and establish a line of research for many others for the future. As a member of the SIG for many years, I have observed the numerous events that have developed the SIG and advanced our research efforts. In the next section, I present my perspective and thoughts for the future.

Perspective and Thoughts for the Future of PDS Research

I wrote an article a long time ago sharing ideas of Lee Teitel, looking at what was being researched and why. One of my premises was that it was easier for researchers to tackle the “pre-service” aspect of PDS rather than the workings of the K-12 environment, K-12 student learning, or the structure of the university. Oftentimes, the PDS researchers were untenured faculty who were also responsible for pre-service teaching. Being able to connect what they did for their day jobs along with their research was often a win-win solution for meeting presentation and publication requirements. Much was learned about structuring pre-service programs and building better future teachers. However, there were gaps in the world of PDS Research. Who was looking at the other aspects of PDS? Who was investigating how PDS was helping in-service teachers grow as professionals and stay in the classroom? Rather than seeing teachers as the cogs in the wheel of schools, PDS teachers are expected to be the lynchpins facilitating the learning of K-12 students by experimenting with curriculum and instruction, broadening the services afforded to the overall school community, guiding pre-service and novice teachers, and functioning as liaisons with and sometimes as faculty at the university. Little research has been conducted on how PDS helps or has helped this critical population to improve, be challenged and grow within their classrooms. Likewise, PDS Research has only delved slightly into the notion of those involved in PDS as educational change agents. In what ways has PDS helped to change the way we look at schooling, divested

ourselves of conservative, traditional thinking, and considered all students and their families as learners? How have we helped the school leadership understand the depths and breadth of distributive leadership and the power of teachers to help shape the school future? Beyond the K-12 environment, how has PDS Research helped us to re-think the university – as a place to not only produce new teachers ready for the demands of the 21st century, but also further the education of teachers and administrators and to help connect and re-think the way university faculty interact with K-12 schools. When young researchers take the “easy” route of researching their own practices within PDS, we need to have others step up to drive the bus down these other avenues. The important research lies in understanding the whole, the third space (Holmes Group, 1990; Rutter, 2011, pp. 298-300), which sets us apart from other pre-service interventions. We cannot afford to be parochial in our thinking and stick to what we know and do. Otherwise, we will just get stuck in the mud and the wheels will fall off the bus.

In 2003, the SIG members elected Jeanne Tunks as Chair to steer the SIG during the early days of the “accountability” movement in education. This next section presents Tunks’ reflections and her perspective on the future followed by the other panelists – Jane Neapolitan, Diane Yendol-Hoppey, and Linda A. Catelli.

Jeanne Tunks

Actions During Leadership Tenure (2003-2005)

I was Chair when “accountability” in education was on the cusp of approaching universities. No Child Left Behind, initiated in 2001, established to account for all school students’ learning, was reaching into accountability by universities and colleges that were preparing teachers. In addition, NCATE, as mentioned previously, was in the process of designing the NCATE PDS Standards in 2001 in an effort to provide PDSs with a set of tools to examine progress toward a leading stage of development. The standards, developed and tested in various PDS settings, particularly in Maryland, were delivered to the PDS community shortly thereafter (see Appendix A for the NCATE PDS Standards and stages of development).

During my tenure as Chair, I both used and promoted the use of the NCATE PDS Standards as a tool for not only studying the PDS, but also to develop PDS programs toward higher levels of excellence. To that end, Marsha Levine (1998), one of the architects of the NCATE PDS Standards, was invited to the SIG meeting to guide participants in the understanding and use of the Standards in PDS practice. This discussion persisted throughout my tenure in the position. The most important aspect of the standards was the imperative to conduct research, both *in* and *on* the PDS.

Based on my use of the standards to guide the PDS I oversaw at the University of North Texas, and in exchanges at AERA meetings, I observed a continued need to clarify how

the standards applied to research. During my final years as Chair of the SIG, Jane Neapolitan and I began to conjure the notion of a framework that combined the AREA supported research methodologies (arts-based, historical, philosophic, case study, survey, ethnographic, comparative, experimental, and quasi-experimental) and the NCATE PDS Standards. The theoretical model was developed by the two of us over the last two years of my tenure, and resulted in a book, *A Framework for Research on Professional Development Schools* (2007). The PDSR SIG served as a platform for creating connections and developing support systems of the continuation of research on the PDS. The most valuable use of the book would be for other PDS workers to test the theory and determine if it aligns with the principles set forth in the design, and if so, write about it and share this with others.

Perspective and Thoughts for the Future of PDS Research

Although at this point in my connections to PDS settings have moved to international venues, I continue to contend that it is vital to know at what stage the PDS has developed across the categories defined in the NCATE PDS Standards. Knowing how the PDS is performing at the levels of *beginning*, *developing*, *standard*, and *leading* across the five Standards of: learning community, accountability and quality assurance, collaboration, diversity and equity, and structures, resources, and roles, can serve to guide the research that is conducted. In the development of the theoretical framework for conducting research on the PDS, the salient recommendation was for those seeking to do research *in* and *on* PDS was to examine the context of the PDS, comprehend the stage at which the PDS functions prior to making research decisions. These stages can be determined in multiple ways, but to follow the intent of PDS, it would seem prudent to include all stakeholders and potential researchers in the process of determining the stage, although the stages could vary across standards. Including more stakeholders in the process also encourages support for the research by more stakeholders.

It is also important to know the research capability of the team of university personnel, classroom teachers, supervisors, PDS interns, and school leaders. Once this can be established, research directions emerge. Capability can include the skills for qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods research, and can vary among researchers from the university/college and school personnel. Capability can also include the ability to lead research steps for those new to the practice of conducting research across educational entities. Capability can represent the ability to follow through with knowledge gained from research to the dissemination to professional journals, conference presentations, district reports, university reports, poster presentations at schools, etc.

Knowing the capacity of classroom teachers is particularly important when action research is applied. Classroom teachers, accustomed to examining student data, learning and decision

making in PLCs (Professional Learning Communities), and capable of making decisions about changing practice to accommodate student learning, in my experience, generally assume that university/college personnel will conduct research. Due to the requirement to publish among university personnel, the capacity of university personnel to guide teachers and possibly PDS interns through action research should be examined. Knowing the capabilities and capacities of all members of the PDS team will serve to guide forms and intensity of research that align with the capacities and capabilities of the personnel involved.

At the time of writing this, NCATE has been replaced by a new accrediting agency: the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP). This agency provides guidelines and expectations for Clinical Preparation, Clinical Educators, and Clinical Experiences. As a definition, the agency provides the following regarding PDS: “Mutually beneficial agreement among various partners in which all participating members engage in and contribute to goals for the preparation of education professionals. This may include examples such as pipeline initiatives, Professional Development Schools, and partner networks” (Kurimoto, 2018, p. 1). It would behoove future researchers working to improve the field of PDS to continue to use the NCATE PDS Standards as a resource. When CAEP produces guidelines for monitoring PDS progress toward a *leading state*, these could be examined and if feasible, used as a replacement for the NCATE PDS Standards.

The PDSR SIG offers through multiple presentations, but also the SIG’s business meeting, opportunities for PDS researchers to network and create alliances of research across PDS programs. For the future of PDS Research, it will be important to find ways to openly share ideas, data, and results, with the intent to expand research to new levels. With the inclusion of NAPDS as an arm of the SIG, it would be important to encourage research among NAPDS members, with the intent to support and elevate both entities.

Support PDS work, but also imagine other possibilities. The International Teacher to Teacher Exchange (ITTTE), a group that was formed following initial research in Guatemala, has led to the development of an extension of the original PDS program between the University of North Texas and the Denton Independent School District. In the ITTTE in-service teachers who participated in the Denton PDS between 2000-2010 as student interns, supervising teachers, and/or administrators, engage in an exchange with Guatemalan teachers to work toward improving teaching and learning in mathematics. The ITTTE follows the principles of the NCATE PDS Standards, is inquiry-based, and in essence, is an extension of the original PDS program. This one program is an example of what is possible, many more are waiting to be created and nurtured. Testing the model of PDS can lead to unknown and uncharted possibilities. For the future, I say, imagine big and do what it takes to continue research *on* and *in* the PDS for the betterment of teaching and learning.

Jane Neapolitan

Actions During Leadership Tenure (2005-2008)

When I was Chair of the SIG, application of the NCATE PDS Standards was in high gear. Research studies framed by the standards and presented at the annual meetings of the AERA increased, as did the quality of the studies. Many of them included school partners as co-researchers in an effort to close the theory-practice gap. In 2005, 2006, and 2007, Jeanne Tunks, Alison Rutter, and I conducted pre-conference workshops at the annual meetings of the AERA entitled, *A Developmental Approach for Research on Professional Development Schools*. Through these workshops we found many like-minded colleagues who were attempting to examine in a systematic way the components of the PDS model: teacher preparation, professional development, research and inquiry, and student achievement. Many of those who participated in the workshops also had strong foundations for partnership work based on the ideals of the National Network for Educational Renewal (NNER) and The Holmes Partnership. The various standards, precepts, and guidelines from the associations helped strengthen the resolve of PDS practitioners and researchers to push forward as the PDS effort took hold nationally and internationally. At the same time, however, there was an increasing awareness of the need to assess where the PDS effort was headed and which set of guidelines would be the most useful for moving forward. Summarizing and analyzing the vast array of documentation, inquiry, and research “in and on” PDS had also become a challenge.

One person who was instrumental in trying to connect the many teacher preparation organizations affiliated with PDS was the late Claudia A. Balach, Assistant Professor at Slippery Rock University. As the NAPDS began to rise in popularity, Claudia sought to make connections between NAPDS and the AERA PDSR SIG. At the 2007 conference of the NAPDS, Claudia and I gave a presentation titled, *AERA PDS Research Special Interest Group: Benefits for the K-12 Educator*. We agreed that the SIG would benefit from engaging P-12 teacher-researchers in its work, thus lending fidelity to the ideas set out in the original Holmes Reports (1986, 1990, 1995). We also agreed NAPDS would benefit from engaging university researchers who could collaborate with school partners in order to provide evidence that PDS makes a difference for students, teachers, and the community. In August 2007, the NAPDS brought together representatives from the aforementioned organizations in order to deliberate on what was essential about the PDS. This resulted in tangible objectives called the “Nine PDS Essentials” (see the NAPDS, 2018 in the references for the link to the 9 essentials).

During this time, membership in the SIG saw an uptick, and attendance at SIG sessions and business meetings increased. Thanks to the vision of Alison Rutter, a PDS Doctoral Seminar, as mentioned previously, was established and held concurrently with the annual meetings of AERA. These sessions supported the development of emerging researchers and new SIG leaders, such as Rebecca Burns (University of South Florida) and Cindy

Gutierrez (University of Colorado at Denver). The Claudia A. Balach Award was also established to recognize outstanding collaborative research conducted by school-university partners.

In October 2009, I had the good fortune of receiving a small grant from my dean and department chair to host what we called a “PDS studies invitational meeting” at Towson University. Within two days, a network of scholars, all who were associated with the SIG, and many with the NAPDS, drafted an outline of what would become the 2011 Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education (NSSE) titled, *Taking Stock of Professional Development Schools: What’s Needed Now* (Neapolitan, 2011). As stated in the introductory pages of the Yearbook, Issue 2,

The yearbook serves as (1) a compendium that preserves the history and development of PDS as a widely adopted model for the clinical education of teachers, (2) a resource for scholars undertaking future studies of PDS, (3) a resource for practitioners, including school district based practitioners and administrators, for leveraging change in the policy and practice of PDS, and (4) an evidence-based critical reflection on PDS by a panel of independent scholars for advancing the PDS endeavor to a higher level of effectiveness for teacher quality and student learning. (p. 284)

Through this issue, the authors sought to capture the history, vision, and approaches to PDS; and to summarize the effectiveness of PDS on teacher preparation, professional development, and student learning. The authors also sought to illuminate PDS as leverage for change and, ultimately, examine the sustainability of PDS for going forward. One of the key features of the yearbook are response chapters by noted scholars in teacher preparation partnerships including Ken Howey, A. Lin Goodwin, Linda Catelli, Donna Wiseman, and Lee Teitel.

Perspective and Thoughts for the Future of PDS Research

First and foremost, PDS is an educational innovation that should be celebrated! Based on what we learned from the yearbook project, we know with certainty that PDS makes a difference for teacher candidate preparation. The NCATE Blue Ribbon Panel Report, *Transforming Teacher Education through Clinical Practice: A National Strategy to Prepare Effective Teachers* (NCATE, 2010), is predicated on the foundational work of PDS partnerships accomplished since the late 1980s. To borrow a phrase from the NCATE PDS Standards (2001), “threshold conditions” were created by the PDS innovation for two decades and accelerated the growth of educational partnerships as a platform for the new clinical preparation model. We also learned from the yearbook there is evidence that PDS impacts teacher development and student learning. These two areas continue to be a challenge in PDS research, but under the right conditions,

could be accomplished through contemporary approaches such as research-practice partnerships (see Coburn and Penuel, 2016).

Second, PDS has evolved to become more inclusive of the outside community, which is part of the original vision expressed by the Holmes Group (i.e., school-university-community partnership). Many of the current studies shared through the AERA SIG, NAPDS, and elsewhere reflect how the focus of PDS work has now been extended to include engagement with the community. The CREST-Ed Teacher Residency Fellows program at Georgia State University (GSU) is a prime example of how the PDS model has been refocused to recruit and prepare a diverse teacher workforce, support the preparation of teachers for high needs schools, and provide high quality professional development opportunities for in-service teachers in local school districts. A sustained track record of leadership in PDS research and practice by a team of administrators, faculty, and researchers at GSU—combined with the dedication of a network of administrators, teachers, and staff in the schools—is evidence that the PDS model has now become interwoven into the fabric of the new status quo for teacher preparation and school improvement. Research to capture the magnitude of this extended PDS will require greater levels of visioning, collaboration, planning, and resources.

Finally, let me pass along something my mentor and colleague Marsha Levine, Director of the NCATE PDS Standards Field Test Project, once shared with me: “PDS is just jazz!” Like any great melody, you set it free so others can try it, interpret it, and reinvent it. With that said, I believe we should continue to take the PDS “melody” into new territories wherever it is needed and wherever it can do the most good. It should know no limits.

Diane Yendol-Hoppey

Actions During Leadership Tenure (2008-2011)

During the 2008-2011 period, teacher education faculty continued to face increasing pressure to develop PDSs while simultaneously enhancing their own research productivity. This pressure was compounded by the publication of the NCATE Blue Ribbon Report Panel (2010). This report echoed a cacophony of earlier calls for developing more robust clinical contexts (e.g., the Holmes Partnership, the National Network for Educational Renewal, the National Association of Professional Development Schools, and initiatives of the American Federation of Teachers, the National Education Association, the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, Association of Teacher Educators and the American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education). In line with these calls, the AERA’s PDSR SIG provided PDS researchers with a forum to discuss the complexities of cultivating PDSs as well as identifying and capturing the roles, practices, pedagogy and activities that occurred within PDSs.

PDS Research intensified during this period and between 2008-2011 there were 174 peer-reviewed publications that

described PDS activities and research with some of these publications demonstrating impact. The SIG served as a major forum for sharing and critically examining the emerging research and readying these manuscripts for publication. In reviewing the SIG presentations, research questions during this period typically focused on identifying structures, roles and routines that supported PDS work, with most of these research questions being primarily qualitative in nature. In the decades building up to this period, PDS scholars had been defining the work of PDS while engaging in the work of building PDS. Although these research questions were appropriate, during this period it became increasingly clear that PDS teacher education reform would require a broader range of PDS research foci with a clear emphasis on understanding “impact.”

Perspective and Thoughts for the Future of PDS Research

An analysis of the PDSR SIG’s programs and partnerships depicts a diversity of research foci or perspectives, which have emerged as we built PDSs across the nation. These foci differed according to where the researchers’ placed their gaze. In some cases, researchers took a very broad view of the work while at the same time others focused on sub-components of PDS work. One way to describe the research foci is to use an “egg carton, egg, and chick” illustration. The first research foci can be represented by an “egg carton.” The PDS, like the egg carton, represents the container or the organization that supports enacting high quality educator learning. The organization is the place where stakeholders collaborate together.

In this research, researchers have often taken a more bird’s eye view by studying the PDS as an organization to be developed and sustained. Much of this research focuses on how to get the PDS as an organization to function, what the barriers and facilitators are to the work, and lessons learned. In addition to exploring the PDS as an organization, many researchers’ have placed their inquiry gaze on the “eggs.” The eggs might represent PDS practices, signature pedagogy, or other activities that reflect how educators learn within the PDS context. These might include PDS signature pedagogy (Yendol-Hoppey & Franco, 2014) such as co-teaching and PLCs or activities such as evaluation, coaching and/or mentoring, partnership, course and/or instructional, and leadership practices (Yendol-Hoppey & Hoppey, 2018). The “eggs” might also represent research focused on better understanding the roles of the various PDS stakeholders (e.g., interns, mentors, hybrid roles, principals).

Although research in this category typically does offer insight into the impact of those individual practices, roles, and pedagogy on learning within the PDS, many of these studies focus on illustration and process. A research foci on learning outcomes is often considered the gold standard of research by policy makers. This suggests a third research foci, represented by the “chicks.” In some cases, PDS scholars have used more mix methods and quantitative methods to explore the specific impact or new learning that resulted due to these practices and

pedagogy. The chicks represent the new learning that “hatches” within the PDS. In a few cases (e.g., GSU Anchored Action Research) researchers have begun to explore the level and quality of learning within the PDS and the degree to which it might be better than others. Policy makers typically see this kind of research as the gold standard. For example, research on teaching hospitals indicate that the “unadjusted 30-day mortality rates at major teaching hospitals is lower by 1.5 percentage points than those at nonteaching hospitals (Dashoff, 2017). Whether or not as a PDS research community we believe this is the right question, many policy makers and administrators wish to have findings like these to demonstrate PDS impact. Given the complexity of the PDS work, capturing this type of impact remains challenging.

The PDSR SIG’s efforts to recognize PDS activities that represent “beginning to advanced stages of PDS development” has been important for the success of the PDS community. As we know, conceptualizing, establishing, and sustaining PDSs are time intensive endeavors for both school and university-based teacher educators. As a result, being able to study the work one is doing is essential as teacher educators strive to develop high quality clinical partnerships while simultaneously maintaining scholarship activity. Over the last two decades, the SIG has provided hundreds of teacher educators the opportunity to share their successes and struggles related to PDS development as well as a forum for presenting research related to their work.

Linda A. Catelli

Actions During Leadership Tenure (2017-2018)

In May of 2017, I became Chair of the SIG for a one-year tenure. Previously as Chair Elect, I worked with the then Chair, Gwen Benson and past Chair, Susan Ogletree to refine a description for a new, non-officer leadership position for the SIG titled Research Relations Liaison (RRL). Initiated in 2016 by Rebecca Burns, Chair of the Policy and External Relations Committee of the NAPDS, this new SIG position was seen as a vehicle for strengthening the connection between the two entities, advancing PDS Research, and elevating it to a national level. The intent was not only to connect the two entities in more meaningful ways, but also to have PDS practitioners, researchers, and scholars collaborate on joint projects from which they both may benefit. At the 2017 Annual Meeting of the AERA, a description of the RRL position was introduced, circulated to the membership, and favorably received. Subsequently, the SIG and the NAPDS agreed to officially work together to develop the new position and the process for selecting the first RRL. This was an historic event of monumental proportions and a milestone for the SIG. It marked the beginning of a new era of “collaboration” between the two entities. In the summer of 2017 it was announced that Susan Ogletree from GSU was to serve as the First RRL (see Appendix B for the official description of the RRL position).

The NAPDS “kicked off” the new position and collaboration with a front-page article in their *PDS Partners* magazine. The article, written by Susan and titled *Advancing Research Around NAPDS*, detailed the RRL position and outlined a plan for her two-year tenure (2017-2019). The SIG made the announcement to its membership of 153 in late July via an email update. Previously, I had decided in May that it was important during my tenure to accomplish two interrelated agenda goals: (1) actualize the impending collaboration and Liaison position, and (2) advance PDS Research and the SIG.

In pursuit of these two action goals, I collaborated with Susan and Rebecca to conduct a joint symposium at the 2018 National Conference of the NAPDS in Jacksonville, FL. We needed to increase an awareness of the newly created position and collaboration, as well as begin to discuss with both memberships issues and proposals for the future. The joint symposium session, titled *Carving a Collaborative Future for Advancing and Elevating PDS Research*, engaged a panel of past NAPDS Presidents and SIG Chairs. The panel was asked to respond to questions posed by the moderators of the session. For example, the questions that were asked were: In your opinion, what is the number one problem facing the field of PDS and PDS Research? And, what are two recommendations you would make to the current leaderships? In addition, a short survey questionnaire was given to all who were present at the symposium (see Appendix C for the questionnaire, panelists and moderators).

The major portion of the symposium, however, was devoted to soliciting information from the audience and panelists regarding their views and thoughts on (a) advancing PDS Research, (b) furthering the new collaboration, and (c) crafting a Collaborative National PDS Research Agenda. Major points of the discussion were recorded for future use, including plans for building a stronger collaboration between the two entities. Among the many issues discussed and points made during the symposium there were four topics that resonated from the audience-panel discussion: One, linking PDS work to pupil achievement and the conflicting viewpoints and issues that surround the topic; two, the need to increase teacher participation in PDS Research and the feasibility of teacher involvement; three, the scattered approach to PDS Research and the need to mainstream our research; and four, the wide divide between researchers and practitioners. The symposium in March was followed in April by a special event held at the 2018 Annual Meeting of the AERA. As mentioned in the introduction, past Chairs and a SIG historian were invited to form a Future’s Panel to reflect on their leadership years and to present their thoughts for advancing PDS Research. Consequently, their presentations have become the topic and content for this article.

In pursuit of my second agenda goal, I invited others to join me in submitting a grant application to the AERA’s Education Research Conference Program. The SIG in collaboration with GSU submitted a grant proposal to the AERA requesting funding for a 3-day research conference focused on advancing PDS Research by building a Collaborative National PDS

Research Agenda. The proposal set forth a plan to have twenty PDS scholars and researchers from different regions of the country, representing diverse perspectives, come together at a research conference to build a national PDS research agenda. The research agenda would include outlines for cross-regional and/or cross-partnership studies intended to strengthen our existing PDS evidence, as well as support the claims and assertions we have made related to the PDS model, mission, and practices.

Also, the agenda would include newer research questions, methods, and conceptual frameworks used to guide teams of next-generation PDS researchers, scholars and practitioners. Although disappointed that we did not receive financial support from the AERA, we were certainly not discouraged! Grant writing is a new activity for the SIG, which from my perspective is critically needed and vitally important to our future. Also, I strongly believe then and now that projects such as building a collaborative national PDS research agenda and holding a national research conference inclusive of national associations would help immensely to advance PDS Research and improve studies conducted over the coming years.

Perspective and Thoughts for the Future of PDS Research

First and foremost, my immediate suggestion for the future of our research and the SIG is based on a recent situation we face. Due to the current unfavorable climate for research, largely caused by the negative attitudes and actions of the present presidency and administration, I suggest that we form newer, collaborative research arrangements with key national associations, universities, private foundations, and state agencies to confront the situation. In addition, the SIG should begin to create “internal,” collaborative arrangements with Divisions and other SIGs of the AERA. Although attempted in the past with some success, such efforts can now be undertaken in a more accepting climate. Currently, the AERA is moving more assertively in the direction of breaking silos and fostering internal collaborative arrangements among and between its internal entities, i.e., SIGs, Divisions. This is seen in their narrative for the 2019 Annual Meeting Theme – *Leveraging Education Research in a “Post-Truth” Era* (AERA, 2019). We should take this moment to contribute to this effort. It will benefit both our research and the SIG.

To advance PDS Research and elevate it to a national level, let me first say that my suggestions are based on my research experiences over the years, my activities as Chair in 2017 and 2018, and on my recent readings in education research and PDS Research (e.g., Coburn & Penuel, 2016; Darling-Hammond, 2016; Snow, Flynn, et al., 2016; Zenkov, 2016). At this point in our evolution, I suggest that we as a PDS field and community increase our empirical research strength and evidence related to the effectiveness of PDS partnerships and the claims, impacts, and assertions we have made associated with the PDS model and mission. In the next five years, we need to conduct studies that

cross partnerships, regions, and networks—studies that will provide us with findings and conclusions that have greater generalizability. This is not meant to take away from our diversity or our innovative nature but rather to reinforce what we do well and expand upon it. Also, this strategy would help us tremendously in impacting policy—policy at the state and national level, and policy in higher education.

Further, conducting research on the interconnectedness and/or the independencies of the four component parts of the PDS model – (a) teacher preparation, (b) professional development, (c) student learning, and (d) research and inquiry – is probably our most complicated area to research but also our most unique and innovative contribution (Castle & Reilly, 2011; Catelli, 2011; Teitel, 2011). More than any other type of educational partnerships, PDSs have the integrative structure and functional model to demonstrate that the “whole” is greater than the sum of its parts (Catelli, 2011; Catelli, Jackson, Marino, & Perry, 2014). Finally, what Ken Howey called for in 2011 is in my opinion still relevant today in 2019 “a national program of inquiry and innovation” (p. 335).

Summary and Final Comment

Over the last two decades, the bulk of PDS Research has been conducted within the PDS context primarily by clinical and tenure-track faculty who conduct the majority of their work in schools and who, in many cases, have disseminated their research through the PDSR SIG. Such research today may be considered practical in that it can potentially engage all stakeholders as researchers and develop research-practice communities to provide insights for improving individual partnerships. To this end, the NCATE PDS Standards remain a viable framework for conducting research in the PDS as suggested by Tunks and Neapolitan. The premise that partnerships progress through developmental stages allows for designing studies that use appropriate research methodologies (Tunks & Neapolitan, 2007), as well as a mixed methods approach.

Although the majority of research studies about PDS have helped improve programs and practices from within partnerships, large-scale studies and studies on PDS partnerships still remain a challenge. Little has been done, as commented by Rutter, to explicate the “third space” created when partnering institutions come together to effect change in schools, universities, and communities. And little has been done to investigate PDS as either an organization focused on examining its “impacts” as mentioned by Yendol-Hoppey, or as an integrated “whole” as remarked by Catelli and Rutter. Furthermore, the interconnectedness and interdependencies of the four-function PDS model and mission has been given little research attention as commented by Catelli. Implicit in all of the above remarks and comments are our recommendations for future research. Going forward, the suggested use of the standards, developmental stages coupled with appropriate research methodologies by Tunks and Neapolitan, and the

“egg carton, egg, and chick” illustration, presented by Yendol-Hoppey, together provide a working schema and framework for conducting, organizing, categorizing and improving PDS Research.

As most of us see it, if PDS Research is ultimately intended to affect policy, then learning outcomes must become front and center in the effort. GSU’s Anchor Action Research project was cited as one of only a few cases in which researchers have had the necessary resources for designing and executing rigorous methodologies at scale in order to make comparisons between PDS-and non-PDS classrooms. The need for increasing rigor and scale in PDS Research can only be fulfilled if studies are conducted across regions, partnerships, and networks. By examining at scale, the interconnectedness and interdependencies of the four functions of PDS, i.e., teacher preparation, professional development, student learning, and inquiry, a most impactful contribution to the field can be made.

The PDS model specifically for teacher preparation and professional development and its associated benefits for building learning communities across the US and abroad has become part of the fabric of clinical educator preparation as we know it today. By adhering to various ideals and frameworks for supporting the work, partnerships have proliferated but may be in jeopardy based on a lack of convincing evidence that could affect policy in the current climate of competing priorities in education. As experienced leaders in the PDS field, we fully recognize the importance of having key organizations join forces and collaborate with one another to successfully confront the situation and move us forward with progress in mind.

The good news is that this is already happening. Recently, the NAPDS and the Association of Teacher Educators (ATE) have agreed to hold their 2019 Annual Meetings back-to-back in Atlanta, Georgia. Both conferences will feature sessions on PDS practices and research. Also, the new Research Relations Liaison position and collaboration between the PDSR SIG and the NAPDS as mentioned in sections will help to build stronger ties between the two entities in order to advance and scale PDS Research for affecting policy and practice in an era of competing priorities. Finally, only through strategic collaborations across multiple institutions and networks, can large scale and rigorous research be attained that will yield impactful results for establishing our uniqueness and sustaining the PDS innovation so many have embraced for over two decades.

Resources and Links

American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education. (2018, January). *A pivot toward clinical practice, its lexicon, and the renewal of educator preparation: Summary brief*. <http://www.aacte.org>.

Dresden, J., Blankenship, S., Nealy, A., Tavernier, M. (2016). What is a PDS? Reframing the conversations. *School-University Partnerships [Special Issue – What is a PDS?]*, 9(3), 64-80.

Garin, E., Burns, R., Robinson, R. (2017). Teacher inquiry in professional development schools: How it makes a difference.

School-University Partnerships [Special Themed Online Issue – Teacher Inquiry], 10(4).

Polly, D., Heafner, T., Chapman, M., Spooner, M. (2015). *Professional development schools and transformative partnerships*. Hershey, PA: IGI Global Publishers.

ATE-PDS SIG (Association of Teacher Educators) - <https://www.ate1.org/PDS-Partnerships-SIG>

CAEP (Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation) - <http://caepnet.org>

CREST Ed at Georgia State University (Collaboration and Resources for Encouraging and Supporting Transformation in Education) - <http://Crest.education.gsu.edu>

ITTT at the University of North Texas (International Teacher-To-Teacher Exchange Program) - <https://www.coe.unt.edu/news/teacher-exchange-unt-program>

NAPDS (National Association for Professional Development Schools) - <https://napds.org>

NNER (The National Network for Educational Renewal) - <https://nnerpartnerships.org>

NNERPP (The National Network of Education Research-Practice Partnerships [RPP]) - <http://nnerpp.rice.edu>

Research in Professional Development Schools – Information Age Publishers Book Series - Series Editors: JoAnne Ferrara, Manhattanville College and Janice L. Nath, University of Houston

SUP

Appendix A

NCATE PDS STANDARDS, ELEMENTS AND DEVELOPMENTAL STAGES

Standard 1: Learning Community

1. Support Multiple Learners
2. Work and Practice are Inquiry-Based and Focused on Learning
3. Develop a Common Shared Vision of Teaching and Learning Grounded in Research and Practitioner Knowledge
4. Serve as Instrument of Change
5. Extended Learning Community

Standard 2: Accountability and Quality Assurance

1. Develop Professional Accountability
2. Assure Public Accountability
3. Set PDS Participation Criteria
4. Develop Assessments, Collect Information and Use Results
5. Engage with the PDS Context

Standard 3: Collaboration

1. Engage in Joint Work
2. Design Role and Structures to Enhance Collaboration and Develop Parity
3. Systematically Recognize and Celebrate Joint Work

Standard 4: Diversity and Equity

1. Ensure Equitable Opportunities to Learn
2. Evaluate Policies and Practices to Support Equitable Learning Outcomes
3. Recruit and Support Diverse Participants

Standard 5: Structures, Resources, and Roles

1. Establish Governance and Support Structures
2. Ensure Progress towards Goals
3. Create PDS Roles
4. Resources
5. Use Effective Communication

Developmental Stages

Beginning Level – Beliefs, verbal commitments, plans, organization and initial work are consistent with the mission of PDS partnerships. PDS partners are committed to key concepts.

Developing Level – Partners are pursuing the mission of the PDS partnership and there is partial institutional support. Partners are engaged in PDS work in many ways. However, their institutions have not yet made changes in their policies and practices for evidence of institutionalization.

At Standard – The mission of the PDS partnership is integrated into the partnering institutions. PDS work is expected and supported, and it reflects what is known about the best practices. At this stage, partners work together effectively resulting in positive outcomes for all learners. Partnering institutions have made changes in policies and practices that reflect what has been learned through PDS work, and that support PDS participants in meaningful ways.

Leading Level – Advanced PDS work is sustaining and generative, leading to systematic changes in policy and practice in partner institutions, as well as to impact on policy at the district, state, and national levels. At this stage the PDS partnership has reached its potential for leveraging change outside its boundaries and its supporting institutions, and has an impact in the broader education community.

Appendix B

DESCRIPTION OF THE RESEARCH RELATIONS LIAISON POSITION

The Research Relations Liaison strengthens the connection between the American Education Research Association’s Professional Development School Research, Special Interest Group (AERA PDSR SIG) and the National Association for Professional Development Schools (NAPDS). The Liaison is mutually agreed upon by both entities and serves a two-year term, which may be renewed.

This individual will:

- Have dual membership in AERA PDSR SIG and the NAPDS
- Be actively engaged in PDS research and scholarship
- Serve as an advocate for PDS research in both entities

- Serve as a member of the NAPDS Policy, Advocacy, and External Relations Committee and the leadership of the AERA PDSR SIG.
- Identify and recruit individuals who can lead research teams as identified by either entity/organization
- Provide recommendations to the NAPDS Leadership and the AERA PDSR SIG Leadership about PDS research-related activities.

- Examine the potential for research publications, which may include edited books or themed/special issues of *School-University Partnerships* and/or the *Journal of Practitioner Research*.

Contribute research updates (approximately 1-2 per year) in NAPDS email blasts and in either the AERA PDSR SIG's newsletter or its email updates.

Appendix C

Short Questionnaire Administered at the 2018 NAPDS Conference Session Entitled *Carving a Collaborative Future for Advancing and Elevating PDS Research*

Questions

1. In the next 3 years, should we conduct research that is more focused on the Process or Outcomes of PDS Partnerships (PDSs)?

Check one a. Process _____ or b. Outcomes _____

2. Are you more interested in knowing the impact of PDSs on
(Check only one)

- _____ a. Students in grades pre-K thru 12
- _____ b. Teachers Candidates
- _____ c. Teachers
- _____ d. Teacher Educators/Professors
- _____ e. School and University Administrators
- _____ Other: _____

3. Please rank from 1 to 4, the research projects you would most prefer to be included in a 3-year national PDS research agenda, with “1” being your most preferable and “4” being your least preferable. Research projects that focus on:

- _____ a. Teacher preparation
- _____ b. Professional development
- _____ c. Student learning
- _____ d. Integration/interdependencies of all three (a-c)

If there are any comments or suggestions you would like to make please do so in the space provided below. Thank you!

Symposium Session -

Moderators: Linda A. Catelli, Susan Ogletree, and Rebecca Burns

Panelists: Alison Rutter, Donnan Stoicovy, Bernard Badiali, and Gwen Benson

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Jeanne Tunks teaches curriculum and instruction at the University of North Texas where she coordinated a PDS for ten years (2000-2010) between the university and the Denton Independent School District. Since 2011, she has coordinated the International Teacher to Teacher Exchange, which extended the Denton/University of Texas PDS into Central America.

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