

8-8-2011

Getting to the PDS Core, Cultivating the Fruit of a School University Partnership: Collaboration, Professionalism, and Instructional Practice

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GETTING TO THE PDS CORE,
CULTIVATING THE FRUIT OF A
SCHOOL-UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP:
COLLABORATION, PROFESSIONALISM, AND INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICE

A Dissertation

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies and Research
in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education

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August 2011

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ABSTRACT

Title: Getting to the PDS Core, Cultivating the Fruit of a School University Partnership: Collaboration, Professionalism, and Instructional Practice

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The purpose of this study was to examine if professionalism and instructional practice of in-service teachers have been influenced due to the collaboration created by a Professional Development School (PDS) partnership. Within 15 elementary schools in Northeastern Pennsylvania, this researcher explored the perceptions of all teacher groups and building level administrators who have worked at a PDS site. Data were gathered using a survey distributed to 601 staff followed by a one-time interview of 13 teachers and four administrators.

The mean score for all Likert Scale questions was above the expected mean. The results of the MANOVA tests showed no overall significance among level of involvement, years of experience, number of PDS students or teaching assignment. Significance was found for the number of student teachers, however a follow-up ANOVA did not support

the overall finding. Interviews of the teachers and administrators revealed that each thought the PDS program has benefited in-service teachers by introducing them to new or fresh ideas, concepts and practices. The data also revealed that the requirements for the PDS pre-service teachers' projects have fostered collaboration among multiple groups of teachers within the PDS site.

This study determined that there is a connection among collaboration, professionalism, and instructional practice. All three terms are intertwined and many responses to the open-ended survey questions and the interview questions included more than one for a single answer. The data unearthed sub-categories under each main term. Additional research includes the need to determine the degree or level to which professionalism and instructional practice are impacted by the collaboration brought to a school through the PDS program.