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ABSTRACT

This paper traces the origins of professional development schools (PDSs), describes their characteristics, examines a network of PDSs, considers the place of PDSs in developing the teaching profession, addresses problems and concerns associated with developing and sustaining PDSs, and draws implications for teacher preparation and the teaching profession in Australia. The professional development school concept was one strand of a complex tapestry of proposals presented in significant U.S. education reform reports of the mid-1980s. Six characteristics are commonly associated with PDSs: (1) collaboration between school and university faculty; (2) commitment to inquiry into new and better approaches to teaching and learning; (3) promoting development of the teaching profession; (4) restructuring traditional leadership and decision-making processes and structures in schools; (5) responsiveness to diverse learners; and (6) developing and modeling exemplary professional practices that can be adopted by other schools. Establishing a statewide network of professional development schools has been a major objective of the Michigan Partnership for a New Education; however, this paper identifies several obstacles that are likely to impede the program's progress towards its ultimate goals. Brief descriptions of three PDS-related resource centers are provided. Three major problems and concerns are identified: (1) the cost, in time and money; (2) the insufficient number of PDSs; and (3) the status of PDSs as an alternate, rather than mainstream, route to becoming a teacher. The conclusion is reached that the PDS is a promising approach to restructuring and improving both schools and faculties of education in Australia. (Contains 21 references.) (IAH)

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SCHOOLS: DO THEY HAVE ANYTHING TO OFFER TO TEACHER EDUCATION IN AUSTRALIA

by

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PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SCHOOLS: DO THEY HAVE ANYTHING TO OFFER TO TEACHER EDUCATION IN AUSTRALIA?

Christine E. Deer and Don Williams

During the past decade or so there has been a great deal of interest in transforming or re-structuring schools so that they will be capable of meeting the needs of children in a rapidly changing world. This has led to a focus on those who learn, those who teach them, and those who educate the teachers. Partnerships involving schools, universities, the business world and the wider community have emerged to address the challenge. A specific example of partnership is the professional development school (PDS) that has developed in many places in the United States. Darling-Hammond, Cobb and Bullmaster (1995) describe the features of PDSs as follows:

> PDSs are a special case of school restructuring; they are collaborations among schools and universities that support the learning of prospective and experienced teachers by creating setting in which novices work with expert practitioners and university-based faculty.
> (1995, p1.)

This paper traces the origins of PDSs, describes their characteristics, examines a network of PDSs, considers their place in the development of the teaching profession, addresses problems and concerns, and then draws implications for Australian education.

ORIGIN OF THE PDS CONCEPT

In the 1980s there was widespread concern about education in the United States and this was expressed in the report of the National Commission on Excellence in Education in 1983. It was in this context in the late 1980s that the establishment of professional development schools took place following the publication of two highly significant reports on American education in 1986: *Tomorrow's Teachers* by the Holmes Group and *A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the 21st Century* by the Carnegie Corporation.

The Holmes Group, named after the Dean of the Harvard Graduate School of Education in the 1930s, represents a group of research universities in the United States. In the early 1980s several leading educationists in some of these universities felt that the major changes which were taking place in society and culture called for new approaches to teaching, learning and the nature of schooling. In particular, the debate needed to be lifted above minimum standards for the accreditation of teacher education programs to concerns about quality and life-long professionalism. *Tomorrow's Teachers* (1986), which was the work of a study group, led to the establishment of the consortium of research universities in 1987. Since then the Holmes Group has published *Tomorrow's Schools* (1990) and has just released *Tomorrow's Teacher Educators,* in draft form.

In order to appreciate the context in which professional development schools were established, it is significant to note the five basic goals that constituted the Holmes Group's manifesto in *Tomorrow's Teachers*. Firstly, teaching is to be made intellectually sound. Prospective teachers are to gain a broad foundation in liberal arts and earn a bachelor's degree in an academic subject. This emphasis on liberal arts is to be complemented with education studies and clinical experiences so that knowledge can be shaped into challenging lessons for children. These commitments do not necessarily mean that professional studies have to be delayed until graduate school and that nobody may gain a license to teach before acquiring a master's degree. Secondly, there is a need to recognize differences in teachers' knowledge, skill and commitment. This recognition calls for structuring internships and induction-year experiences, bringing experienced teachers into partnership with university academics, and preparing experienced teachers for advancement in their careers. Thirdly, there is a need to create relevant and intellectually defensible standards of entry into teaching. Fourthly, schools of education need to be connected to schools. Fifthly, schools need to be made into better places for practising teachers to work and learn.

The focus on schools in the preceding set of goals laid a basis for recommending the creation of professional development schools in which student teachers, novice teachers, experienced teachers, school administrators and university academics formed a partnership to pursue new ways of teaching and learning.

The Carnegie Corporation (1986) in its report, *A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the 21st Century,* took a similar approach to the Holmes Group. It advocated that teacher preparation take place at graduate level in line with other professions, and that a residency be a requirement in the second year of a Master of Teaching program. The residency should take place in clinical schools in which outstanding practitioners passed on their knowledge and skills to others. The analogy was with teaching hospitals where clinical instruction took place for practising physicians.

There were many other contextual factors that were conducive to the establishment and development of professional development schools. The work of John Goodlad (eg, 1990) has had a profound influence on teacher education in the United States. He has stressed the need for the simultaneous renewal of schools and teacher education.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s the stage was set for the establishment of professional development schools or clinical schools. Many universities in the USA changed to a graduate program for teacher preparation and sought special partnerships with schools. Various other names were used to describe them: professional practice schools, induction schools, teaching schools, and partner schools to name a few. This new type of partnership school is not to be confused with the former laboratory schools that existed in many universities, although there have been significant developments in laboratory schools which still operate. Several networks of professional development schools were established to promote the development of the concept, and a Clinical Schools Clearinghouse was created as part of the ERIC Clearinghouse on Teacher Education in Washington DC.

CHARACTERISTICS OF A PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SCHOOL?

It is difficult to come up with a definition of a professional development school that does justice to the range of schools that are operating. This is partly due to the fact that it is an evolving concept based on working out new ways to re-structure schools and to adopt new approaches to teaching and learning. In one sense, it is a process as much as a product. The six characteristics presented below may not apply in all situations.

Collaboration

A characteristic shared by all professional development schools is the collaboration of different groups of people, but in particular the partnership between school teachers and university staff. Both primary and secondary schools that have become PDSs have changed relationships so that there is more mutual planning, shared decision-making and more team-teaching involving interns, beginning teachers, experienced teachers and teacher educators.

Research and Experimentation

There is a strong commitment to discovering new ways to approach teaching and learning by all parties. The old model of mentors inducting novices into the profession by handing on knowledge and skills from on high has given way to a new notion of socialisation. All parties are committed to engage in action research, rethinking practice, experimenting, learning from each other, and expanding the knowledge base of the profession. The teacher is viewed as a professional who is constantly searching for new and better ways of doing things throughout a professional career. Through joint research and experimentation teacher educators have a particular contribution to make to professional development schools but are also beneficiaries in the process.

Development of Teaching Profession

Advocates of PDSs generally believe that these new types of schools, where they genuinely exist, are contributing to the development of the teaching profession (Abdal-Happ, 1991[b]). This matter is discussed later in the paper.

Administration and Leadership

There is a great deal of reference in the literature to the need to re-structure schools. The goal is to manage schools differently so that new approaches to teaching and learning are pursued in a collaborative manner. Hierarchical structures from the past need to give way to collegial and cooperative forms of management and leadership. The training of school administrators is therefore seen as an integral part of professional development schools. The schools themselves need to be adaptive and responsive to the changing demands placed upon them by a changing society.

Context Oriented

The Holmes Group is committed to diversity in education. At the level of professional development schools, this means working in minority group areas and encouraging more people from minorities to enter the teaching profession. PDSs need to be committed to overcoming educational and social inequality. Teaching and learning must be organised so that the needs of all children are addressed.

Model for Other Schools

If professional development schools achieve their high ideals, it is hoped that they will serve as exemplary models for other schools. The view is often expressed that just as all hospitals are not teaching hospitals not all schools will be professional development schools.

Other Goals

From the literature it is possible to identify several other goals that people claim are characteristics of professional development schools. The Sid W Richardson Foundation (undated), for example, regards the development of literacy, numeracy and reasoning skills as a key objective for all professional development schools. However, the limited range of six characteristics described above constitutes a fairly comprehensive description of PDSs. The Michigan Partnership for New Education, described below, shows how these characteristics are being worked out in practice.

MICHIGAN PARTNERSHIP FOR NEW EDUCATION

In its publicity material, the Michigan Partnership for New Education claims to work with leaders in education, business, government, and communities to provide higher levels of learning for all Michigan K-12 students. It hopes it is achieving this goal by creating and demonstrating new methods of teaching and learning. If the Partnership is working, it is supposed to be preparing students for the continuously changing demands of a global economy and the essential responsibilities of citizenship.

To achieve its objectives the Partnership has set up a "revolutionary" operating structure consisting of four interlocking components.

1. The *School and University Alliance* helps schools and universities develop formal cooperative agreements to operate PDSs. The Alliance seeks to develop new approaches to teaching and learning, provide access to research and technical assistance, prepare and develop educational professionals at all levels, and demonstrate exemplary policy and practice.

2. The *Business and Community Alliance* seeks to bring together employers, neighbourhoods, community agencies and the general public to establish local coalitions. It aims to design and implement services, enrich in-school learning, improve student readiness to learn and generally support education.

3. The *Collaborative Leadership Center* hopes to develop leaders who are committed to educational renewal at local and state level. The leaders come from not only schools but also the community, and through collaborative learning processes develop their knowledge, skills and confidence.

4. The *Educational Extension Service* is, as its name implies, a service provider. It provides access to up-to-date research findings and practical materials, links PDSs to each other and a range of other professional and community organisations, and seeks to ensure that the system embodies the best current thinking and research.

The goals and structures set out above represent ideals. In December 1994, the Head of the Partnership produced a statement entitled *New Dimensions* and in it concluded that the partnership had achieved many successes over the past four years. However, the grim reality was that it could not maintain the bulk of its present programs let alone expand them to the several hundred that were originally envisaged. Most of the Partnership's resources go to PDSs at a rate of approximately US$137,500 per annum, and the universities involved usually match this level of expenditure. In 1995 the partnership is considering a reduction in the number of PDSs from 26 to 10 or 14.

Cost was not the only factor that led to the proposed down-sizing which will directly affect the operation of the School and University Alliance. The universities cannot provide human resources at a level required to work effectively with the schools, and practising teachers in schools have insufficient time to meet the demands made upon them. Furthermore, there is an absence of evaluations to justify the worth of the high financial commitment. Perhaps the most telling criticism is the conclusion that the concept of a professional development school is so vaguely defined throughout the state that it is not generalizable. Emphases varied from school to school depending to a large extent upon the ideology of the university faculty associated with the school. The report reached the conclusion that there has been insufficient agreement about the purpose and function of the university connection.

The other three components of the Partnership, the Business and Community Alliance, the Collaborative Leadership Center, and the Educational Extension Service, also came in for some criticism in the *New Dimensions* statement. Despite a range of successful achievements, their work was more fragmented and inconsistent than originally planned.

The *New Dimensions* statement addresses the problems facing the Partnership in the light of its central which is "to serve as a catalyst to reform pre K-12 schooling in Michigan" (p.3) and present a realistic action plan for the future. Issues of leadership, cost, evaluation and dissemination are addressed. There is, however, still a strong commitment to the principles enunciated by the Holmes Group and to a range of additional issues that have guided the partnership in the past.

It is important to note that at the 1994 level of operation in Michigan, not all student teachers gained experience professional development schools. As the partnership is scaled down, even fewer are likely to experience an internship in a PDS. If it is argued that, for the development of the teaching profession, all student teachers should be placed in exemplary PDSs, the Michigan model cannot deliver sufficient places. In Michigan no substantive research has been carried out to compare the performance and professional commitment of those who have been interns in PDSs with those who have not.

NETWORKS OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SCHOOLS

As teachers and teacher educators have grappled with the concept of PDSs, they have shared experiences at conferences, developed networks and adopted means for supporting each other. A few of these are worth mentioning.

Clinical Schools Clearinghouse

This Clearinghouse forms part of the ERIC Clearinghouse on Teacher Education which is located in Washington DC. It publishes digests, bibliographies and a directory of PDSs across the country (eg, Abdal-Haaq, 1991[a] and 1991[b]; ERIC, 1989; Clinical Schools Clearinghouse, 1995).

National Center for Restructuring Education, Schools, and Teaching (NCREST)

Located at Teachers College, Columbia University, in New York, NCREST is a collaboration of professional development schools. It publishes *PDS Network News* and has a range of other research and general publications.

National Center for Research on Teacher Learning

This Center is located in the College of Education at Michigan State University in East Lansing. It is separate from the Michigan Partnership for New Education, but its work is of great significance for those interested in the professional development of teachers. For example, it has sought to explode some myths about how teachers learn and has suggested better approaches.

These networks of PDSs show their actual and potential role in teacher education.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SCHOOLS IN TEACHER EDUCATION?

Professional Development Schools are in a unique position in the history of teacher education. They require teachers in schools, teachers in university faculties of education and students aspiring to be teachers to work together in a collaborative way, not only to enable the credentialling of the aspiring teacher and for the mutual benefit of both groups of teachers concerned, but also to serve the students in the schools. In this process of changing the way teachers are prepared, PDSs also have the potential to play a significant role in the development of teaching as a profession whose members are quality teachers.

What is a profession? There are many definitions. Darling-Hammond (1990, p.268) in discussing professionalization of an occupation wrote:

> Professionalization is not a dichotomous event or a state of grace into which an occupation clearly falls or not. Rather it describes points along a continuum representing the extent to which members of an occupation share a common body of knowledge and use shared standards of practice in exercising that knowledge on behalf of clients. It incorporates conditions of specialized knowledge, self-regulation, special attention to the unique needs of clients, autonomous performance, and a large dose of responsibility for client welfare.

The collaborative work necessary for a successful PDS requires the participants to share a common body of knowledge for the ultimate benefit of the clients who are the children and students in the schools they serve.

Darling-Hammond (1994, p. 4) further states that

> Professionalism starts from the proposition that thoughtful and ethical use of knowledge must inform practice. Yet school reform has rarely focused on the support and improvement of teacher education programs or the development of teacher knowledge.

How do we define the knowledge that teachers of quality require? The recent CERI (1994: pp. 14 - 15) publication '*Teacher Quality*' states that teachers of quality need five sets of 'knowledge'. These are:

1. Content knowledge or knowledge of the substantive curriculum areas required in the classroom.

2. Pedagogic skill including the acquisition and ability to use a repertoire of teaching strategies.

3. Reflection and the ability to be self critical, the hallmark of teacher professionalism.

4. Empathy and the commitment to the acknowledgment of the dignity of others.

5. Managerial competence as teachers assume a range of managerial responsibility within and outside the classroom.

The French (CERI, 1994:36 in Altet, 1993, p. 8) have reduced these sets of knowledge to three simple phrases

Savoir
Savoir-faire
Savoir-etrê

Translatable perhaps as "knowledge, knowing how to do, and knowing how to be" The number of dimensions might possibly be reduced still further, to simply 'knowing and caring'.

PROBLEMS AND CONCERNS ABOUT PDS IN THE USA

There are a number of concerns that are surfacing in the further development of PDSs in the USA. These can be grouped under three main headings. First, the cost of PDS, second, the limited number of PDSs and third, the alternate route rather than mainstream nature of PDSs.

PDSs are costly in terms of consultation and negotiation time for all personnel involved and the financial costs of the new positions that are created in the schools. Like all new initiatives there are costs of this type because **all** participants are learning new roles. Some take on this collaboration with carefully worded contracts setting out the roles, responsibilities and accountabilities for all concerned. In this way the participants know at the outset where each stands. In other situations there is a broadly based contractual agreement and this framework allows flexibility of operation so that as the partners work together they are not hamstrung by now inappropriate prior arrangements. These two contrasting approaches (PDS Exchange, 1995 p.6) are exemplified by the following quotations.

Joyce Grant of the Michigan Partnership for New Education writes:

> The work [of a PDS] is extremely difficult and it requires extraordinarily high levels of work and energy, candour and cooperation, so we want schools to have a good sense of what is they are getting into.

Jean Morrow, who coordinates the Emporia State University/Olathe (Kansas) Unified School District PDS, writes:

> The original scope basically committed the Olathe school district to providing two schools, with ten mentors in each school, and a room in each school for the interns. The university would provide an on-site university co-ordinator and bear the financial investments, such as equipment, stipends, reimbursements for substitutes, and travel for university faculty. .... As we grow in our understanding of what it means to collaborate in the teaching, mentoring, and supervision of PDS interns, we constantly redefine the scope of the partnership, for the scope of the partnership involves far more than just a financial commitment.

A second concern arises because, to date, there are not enough PDSs for all people undertaking initial teacher education courses to complete their school experience. As with any new venture this situation could be considered inevitable.

A third concern is related to the previous concern as, at present, the PDS is seen as an alternate route to the completion of initial teacher education, not a short cut, but an alternate. The concern here rests on the premise that if PDS provide the best kind of field experience for prospective teachers then such schools should not be regarded as an alternate route.

Given these concerns it should also be noted that the draft of The Homes Group report (1995 , pp. 89 -90) *Tomorrow's Schools of Education* is proposing the PDS as integral to tomorrow's school of education.

> Nothing like the PDS has ever before existed in American education. Analogues can be found in medicine with the teaching hospital and in agriculture with the experimental station and the extension service, but the PDS contains characteristics that *sui generis*. This institution and the network of continuous innovation that it is designed to sustain are meant to bring about huge improvements in public schooling. The PDS is no McDonald's franchise to be set in place ready to operate simply by acquiring the proper equipment and following the rules in a manual. Sweat and tears make the PDS. It is as much a process as a place and its dynamism means that the PDS evolves constantly. Human interactions shape each PDS and so no two PDS look exactly the same, though all possess certain characteristics in common.

The final report of the Homes Group is due in the second half of 1995. Additionally, the *National Commission on Teaching and America's Future* (Darling-Hammond, 1995), chaired by Governor Hunt of North Carolina and due to report in September 1996, considered PDS at its March, 1995 meeting in New York.

WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS OF PDS FOR TEACHER EDUCATION IN AUSTRALIA?

PDSs have been established to provide the means to prepare teachers more able to work in the complex business of schooling; to assist in the professional development of both teachers in schools and teacher educators in universities and colleges of education (see Darling-Hammond, Wise and Klein, 1995). As the Holmes Group reports (1995 p.90)

> The PDS stands potentially central to three basic commitments of the Tomorrow's Schools of Education - professional learning in the context of sound practice, improvement oriented inquiry and education standard setting.

We believe there is a strong case in Australian teacher education for much closer relationships than currently exist between faculties of education and the early childhood, primary and secondary schools and centres where their graduates will eventually teach (see Robinson and Darling-Hammond, 1994). For many years there have been great concerns over the quality of the interactions among tertiary staff, their students and school staff and the outcomes of these interactions which are designed ultimately to benefit the children in Australian classrooms. Those involved in teacher education have sought to achieve the types of relationships established in the early 1970s by the Macquarie University Teacher Education Program where master teachers from the schools, university students and university staff met on a regular basis for their mutual benefit.

The PDS goes further than this early pattern and further than the new relationships being established with schools by new programs of field experience across the country. Darling-Hammond (1994, pp. 7-8) writes of the benefits to the teaching profession of PDSs as where they operate beginning teachers

> join professional education with intensively supervised opportunities for practice, [so that] PDSs promise to develop more effective teachers and to reverse three aspects of socialization to teaching that have defined schools' approaches to teacher learning in the past: "Figure it out yourself"; "do it all yourself"; and "keep it to yourself."

PDSs provide the context for creating schools that are learner-centred, for the children in the schools, for the teachers in their workplaces and for teacher educators from universities who share these workplaces. The promise of PDSs is well stated by Darling-Hammond (1995, p.10).

> First, PDSs are creating entirely new frames for teacher learning - frames that prove opportunities for learning by teaching, learning by doing and learning by collaborating. These enhance the learning of teacher educators and veteran teachers as well as beginning teachers.
>
> Second, as they integrate the work of teachers and teacher educators, of schools and universities, of teachers as researchers and researchers as teachers, PDSs are creating possibilities for building entirely new ways of knowing and kinds of knowledge for the profession as a whole.
>
> Finally, as they begin to restructure schools and universities, PDSs are eliciting unanticipated potentials and challenges for rethinking teaching and schooling.

Within the PDSs there is the promise that beginning teachers will receive the mentoring, coaching and supervision they need to learn the complex craft of teaching and become the professionals the children in our schools deserve. The veteran teachers have the chance to work collaboratively with fellow teachers and with university staff so both groups improve their practices as both are building the spirit of mutual inquiry into their daily working lives.

A number of recent developments are making this collaboration more possible than even five years ago. The advent of Email in schools and universities means that regular contact among personnel concerned is facilitated thus overcoming some of the difficulties of timetabling in schools and universities. Each works to a different regime and early morning meetings for school personnel are not always desirable for university staff who may have evening classes. In addition, in some contexts, limiting the number of schools which become PDSs is a way to minimise travel times. In some schools as the school population has decreased it is not difficult to set aside a room for student teachers and university personnel to have an on-site teaching facility. In other schools, the cost of this space must be found, for research (see Darling-Hammond, 1994) shows that it is vital.

The development of PDSs has the potential to restructure schools (see Lieberman, 1995) and to restructure faculties of education which provide teacher education, namely 35 of the 37 universities in Australia. Given the multitude of reports critical of teacher education, both in Australia and overseas, PDSs offer one of the most promising directions. They are a vehicle for providing quality field based experiences for beginning teachers, and the support necessary for teachers and teacher educators to re-examine their practices.

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