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ABSTRACT

This study examined the effectiveness of teachers trained in a Professional Development School (PDS) versus a traditional program. The paper begins with data from earlier research which shows that PDSs prepare graduates better for teaching and managing classrooms than do traditional programs. This study used the North Carolina Teacher Performance Appraisal Instrument to evaluate teachers in their first 3 years of teaching. Teachers trained in a traditional program and teachers trained in a PDS program completed the evaluation. The instrument examined eight functions, though this study investigated only management of student behavior. Findings for years 1-3 showed that PDS teachers had better student behavior management scores in all measured areas than did teachers trained in a traditional program. The best, mediocre, and poorest PDS teachers were better than the best, mediocre, and poorest non-PDS teachers. One of the practices that positively impacted the level of classroom management performance was the formative, coaching nature of the evaluation process. Interns had regular opportunities to participate in non-threatening discussions of their teaching practice. Another positive practice for PDS students was their witnessing and participating in daily reflections with their cooperating teachers and other professionals. (SM)

TITLE: Are Professional Developments School Trained Teachers Better Classroom Manager?

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Professional Development Schools (PDSs) have been glorified as the rescuer of teacher education over the last decade. Many writers have attempted to convince public schools and schools of education to study, develop, and implement Professional Development Schools. Much of the writing supportive of PDSs has been celebratory, little has been critical. This article provides empirical quantitative data descriptive of a Southeastern North Carolina Professional Development School Partnership and the impact of its program on classroom the management skills of classroom teachers. The study includes features and evidences of a successful PDS, related research, disaggregation and analysis of results, and conclusions.

Are Professional Development School Trained Teachers Better Classroom Managers?

Public schools across the nation have a greater need for teachers who are better trained to meet the needs of ever changing students, and who will remain in the educational work force for an extended period of time. One of the most troublesome skills for new teachers is classroom management or discipline. The Renaissance Group (1989) stated that "teachers for the future must ...be adept at managing classrooms. They must understand ... and be able to match their teaching with the experiences and cultural background of their students "(p. 2). Gordon (1991 p. 5) in stating the needs of novice teachers said, "Many beginning teachers need help with...managing the classroom." Ninety percent of teachers in 1988 identified disruptive students as a major problem in their profession (Carnegie Foundation, 1988).

Student characteristics are changing. Classroom management problems can be traced to television, students who speak languages other than English, multiple ethnicities, poor home backgrounds, cocaine and alcohol syndrome babies, and an increasingly violent world.

Professional development schools (PDS) have been advocated for the last ten years as the knight in shining armor of teacher education. Much has been published to persuade public schools and schools of education to study, develop, and implement PDSs. PDS partnerships had exploded into over 1,000 public school sites in this country by 1998 (Abdal-Haaq, 1998). This article will review the research and summarize a recent study supporting the value of the PDS as it related to classroom management for new teachers.

Features of a PDS

No official standards for professional development schools have been adopted, but some generally accepted practices that those attempting to institute a PDS might follow. According to Levine & Trachtman(1997), the purposes of these partnerships, are to "share responsibilities for the clinical preparation of new teachers, the professional development of experienced faculty, the support of research directed at improving practices, and enhanced student learning" (p.1).

Some traits commonly found in a PDS include the following: the modeling of good teaching practices; an instilling in the teacher of an understanding of students, the learning process, how culture influences learners, an ability to model critical thinking, and pedagogy; research and development of teaching practices is needed; and the student teaching experience and other pre-service experiences should be strengthened and integrated into the school site.

Evidence of PDS Effectiveness

There has been inconclusive research on the impact of PDS. Even though there has been much fanfare, there have been relatively few studies showing the impact of the PDS on teacher performance. Neufeld and Bori-Schacter (1991) comment that "... we are unable to draw conclusions about whether, in what ways, and to what extent future teachers are better prepared in PDS sites" (p. 49). They also believe that there is no evidence that PDSs "lead to better teaching" (p. 4). Levine & Trachtman (1998) and Abdal-Haqq (1998) also agree that there is no evidence that an internship in a PDS has a positive impact on the quality of a teacher's education. And if there is no evidence that the PDS has a positive impact on a teacher's education then can the PDS have a positive impact on classroom management skills, an outcome of the teacher's education? This article will look at the impact of the value of a PDS, as it relates to classroom management skills.

The UNC-W/Duplin County PDS

The University of North Carolina at Wilmington (UNC-W) and Duplin County Schools undertook a multi-year trial of these PDS characteristics to test some of these assumptions. The project was established in 1991 between UNC-W and Duplin County Schools with Wallace Elementary School as the pilot site. The implementation of the PDS program came about as a result of the belief by Duplin County and UNC-W that a more effective teacher education program needed to be and could be created. A professional development school approach was chosen after much research and study. The steering committee decided that a PDS approach would provide the type of learning centered supervision needed to promulgate learning at all levels of the school.

As a result, each of the following practices was integrated into the UNC-W/Duplin County PDS Project. There was a high level of local school/school district/university collaboration. An advisory board, composed of personnel from UNC-W, central office staff, principals, and teachers, was set up to design, implement, and administer the program.

Cooperating teachers and interns were involved in curriculum change projects. The curriculum change projects had an impact on students, interns, individual teachers, grade levels, and the whole school. Change projects included whole language, and integration of the curriculum through thematic and conceptual units.

Interns were required to study, develop, and implement classroom management plans. They were coached in the development and implementation of the plans by the cooperating teacher and the university supervisor. As the intern implemented the plan he/she was guided in the reflection process on the reasons for successes, improvement needs, and next steps.

Methods courses were taught at local school sites to pre-service education majors within a block schedule. Longer visits to the school site with less frequent off campus travel were made possible by the block schedule.

Grade levels, school committees, and the school improvement team included interns as active participants. Interns were a vital part of the governance, organization, and dynamics of the schools.

Teacher participation in the PDS program, as a cooperating teacher, was completely voluntary; and all teachers were allowed input, via normal school governance practices, into the decision making process. In this way some of the normal resistance to change was overcome. As the PDS began to take shape, more and more teachers bought into the theory and practice and became a part of the success of the program. The UNC-W/Duplin County PDS was a success because individuals and groups at each level integrated it into their belief systems and helped make it come to pass.

A graduate level course was offered in developmental supervision and coaching for cooperating teachers and principals. An intern evaluation process, that was formative in nature was used. This process encouraged and cultivated reflective thinking by interns, cooperating teachers, university professors, and principals.

This change process did have its share of problems. Many teachers desired to continue teaching in more traditional ways. There was a general suspicion of university professors because of their long hiatus from the elementary classroom. Some of the cooperating teachers shied away from having to spend personal time in the developmental supervision class.

Previous PDS Studies Related to Classroom Management

In 1996 a qualitative study was done by the University of North Carolina at Wilmington (UNC-W) to determine how the principals, teachers, and student teachers viewed the effectiveness of the PDS program. The UNC-W study (Hayes et al., 1996) revealed that principals and teachers had a positive attitude toward the PDS program, but did not show if the PDS program improved performance of new teachers.

Another study of PDS results was reported by Neubert and Binko (Educational Leadership, 1998). This was a qualitative study of a pilot PDS site in a Maryland technical high school.

Findings of the Previous Studies

According to the Hayes study, some of the major benefits of the Duplin County/UNC-W PDS are as follows:

1. "These graduates were 'well prepared' for teaching" (p. 22).
2. "This group of beginning teachers was 'much better prepared'" in "classroom management" (p. 22).
3. These students "were better prepared for the role of teacher" as a result of the "improved structure for the student teaching experience, the change in the relationships during the experience, and the resulting outcomes related to student's reflection and self-directedness" (p. 18).
4. "The teaching performance of the group as a whole was ..... much better or somewhat better in the specific areas of teaching performance in comparison to other beginning teachers" (p. 22).
5. There were "two characteristics that distinguished this group from other beginning teachers: 1) their openness in sharing their thoughts, successes and mistakes and 2) their ability to self-analyze, problem-solve and capitalize on available resources" (p. 22).

The results of the Neubert and Binko study showed that "the PDS internship was more effective than the regular program in preparing teacher candidates to maintain classroom discipline, ... and reflect on their teaching" (p. 46).

The Duplin County/UNC-W Study

This article shows that PDS teachers do have higher teaching performance in the area of management of student behavior than Non-PDS trained teachers. Details of the study that launched this article follow.

The Duplin County/UNC-W study compared the teacher evaluation scores from 79 teachers over a five-year period. Even though the study spanned a five-year period from 1992-93 through 1996-97, data were collected for only the first three consecutive years of teaching for each teacher.

The North Carolina Teacher Performance Appraisal Instrument (NCTPAI) was used to evaluate these teachers. Thirty-seven were trained in a traditional teacher preparation program at UNC-W and forty-two of the teachers were trained in the UNC-W/Duplin County PDS, at the same university. A total of 183 evaluations were used in the comparison study; 94 from the PDS group and 89 from the Non-PDS group.

The Instrument

An instrument that has been validated and has high inter-rater reliability, The North Carolina Teacher Performance Appraisal Instruments, was used to evaluate the teachers in their first three years of teaching. The NCTPAI is an instrument with eight functions and uses a six point Likert scale. The highest possible score on any specific function is six and the lowest possible score is one. Even though the NCTPAI is composed of eight functions, the only function that will be discussed here will be Function Two: Management of Student Behavior.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed comparing maximum, minimum, and mean NCTPAI scores of the traditional group and the PDS group. In each case a T-Test was applied to the means of the two groups to determine significance of <.05.

The data were disaggregated in several ways. Comparisons of the PDS and Non-PDS groups were made for Function Two: Management of Student Behavior for the following scores: the total of years one – three; year one; year two; and year three.

Years One - Three

The findings for Years One-Three showed that the PDS teachers had better Management of Student Behavior scores in all measured areas. There were 94 PDS observations and 89 Non-PDS observations for Function Two: Management of Student Behavior for Years One through Three PDS vs. Years One through Three Non-PDS. The minimum, maximum, and mean was greater for the PDS group. The results of a paired samples T-Test, with less than .05 as a significant difference, showed a difference of 0.007. This shows a probability of a significant difference between the PDS and Non-PDS Groups on Function Two: Management of Student Behavior.

Year One

The findings for the first year showed PDS teachers had some higher scores after the initial year of teaching. The PDS minimum and mean scores were higher for Function Two: Management of Student Behavior. The maximum scores were the same. There was not a significant different in the means with a T-score of .419.

Year Two

The PDS and Non-PDS scores were compared again after the second year. There were 31 PDS observations and 31 Non-PDS observations. The scores after the second year showed greater differences than the year one scores. The PDS scores for Function Two: Management of Student Behavior were greater in maximum, minimum, and mean. The PDS teacher mean scores were significantly higher with a T-score of .000.

Year Three

In year three, there were again major differences between the PDS and Non-PDS scores on the NCTPAI, with the PDS scores being higher in all areas. There were 21 PDS observations and 24 Non-PDS observations.

The PDS Function Two: Management of Student Behavior had greater scores on maximum, minimum, and mean than the Non PDS group. The PDS mean was significantly different than the Non-PDS mean with a T-score of .010.

Analysis of Results

An examination of the results clearly indicates the teachers trained in the PDS scored higher on Function Two: Management of Student Behavior of the NCTPAI than the teachers trained in a traditional student teacher program. There were significant differences of the mean scores across all groups except Year One. The other statistical comparisons in this study also indicated there were positive results.

The PDS group's consistently higher maximum scores show that the best of the PDS classroom management was better than the best of the Non-PDS classroom management. The higher mean scores show that the average or mediocre classroom management for the PDS group

was better than the other group. The higher minimum scores show that the poorest PDS classroom management was better than the poorest Non-PDS teaching.

Discussions

The data quite convincingly show teachers trained in the Duplin County/UNC-W Professional Development School Student Teaching Project had higher overall classroom management performance, as measured by the NCTPAI, than those teachers involved in a traditional student teaching program at the same university. The best, mediocre, and poorest PDS teachers are better than the best, mediocre, and poorest Non-PDS teachers. The most compelling case can be made for comparing the PDS and Non-PDS groups over several years and generalizing with larger rather than smaller groups of teachers. This evidence warrants the belief that these results were impacted by specific practices prevalent in the UNC-W/Duplin County Professional Development School.

One of the practices that seems to have had a positive impact on the level of classroom management performance was the formative, coaching nature of the evaluation process. Interns had a regular opportunity to participate in a non-threatening discussion of their teaching practices.

A second practice of the PDS that may have positively impacted the student intern as they became practitioners was their witnessing and participation in daily reflections. The interns sat with their cooperating teacher and other professionals in professional reflections of their teaching practices. This practice, if carried over into the new teacher's professional practice, would help to enhance and sharpen the novice teachers classroom management skills. Internalization of the practice of professional reflection would assist any teacher in improving professional practice.

As a result of these findings we may expect a positive long-range impact on teacher retention. The research shows that many new teachers leave the profession during their first four years and one of the primary reasons for abandoning teaching is frustration with classroom management problems (Public School Forum of North Carolina , 1996). If these teachers have enhanced skills and adaptability as a result of their PDS experience, they well may be able to weather the storm of their novice years and help give strength to other new teachers who are struggling.

	Maximum		Minimum		Numbers of Observations		Mean		
	PDS	Non PDS	PDS	Non PDS	PDS	Non PDS	PDS	Non PDS	T-Test
Years One - Three	6	5	3	2	94	89	4.255	3.910	0.007
Year One	5	5	3	2	42	34	3.810	3.667	.419
Year Two	6	5	4	3	31	31	4.484	3.906	.000
Year Three	6	5	4	3	21	24	4.810	4.250	.010

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