Using School and University Partnership Resources to Enhance Rigor in Self-Assessment and Evaluation at Professional Development Schools

Gwen C. Marchand, University of Nevada, Las Vegas
Lori Olafson, University of Nevada, Las Vegas
Susan Steaffens, Clark County School District

ABSTRACT: This paper discusses the role of evaluation in the development of Professional Development Schools (PDS) and how evaluation techniques can be used to increase the rigor of self-study activities in a PDS. Evaluation activities may be challenging for a PDS given limited resources. Yet, creative use of school and university expertise can help PDSs gain valuable information about their development and areas for improvement. We describe a collaborative evaluation project in which university and school site members worked together to develop evaluation questions and methods to enhance National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) self-study procedures for Professional Development Schools. The processes surrounding the development of the PDS partnership, the development of the evaluation project, and the steps undertaken to conduct the evaluation are described. The description of the project highlights partnership activities in areas other than teacher education, which are not as common in the PDS literature. The article concludes with general findings from the evaluation and recommendations for PDSs wishing to conduct similar evaluation projects.

NAPDS Essentials Address: #1/A comprehensive mission that is broader in its outreach and scope than the mission of any partner and that furthers the education profession and its responsibility to advance equity within schools and, by potential extension, the broader community; #4/A shared commitment to innovative and reflective practice by all participants; #5/Engagement in and public sharing of the results of deliberate investigations of practice by respective participants; #8/Work by college/university faculty and P–12 faculty in formal roles across institutional settings; #9/Dedicated and shared resources and formal rewards and recognition structures

Introduction

Research on Professional Development Schools (PDS) has outlined many benefits for pre-service teacher education (Dangel et al., 2009) and the research literature documents successful school-university partnerships in many curricular areas such as

science (Scharmann, 2007), social studies (Vontz, Franke, Burenheide, & Bietan, 2007), reading (Rogerson, Corbin, Misulis, & Taylor, 2005), art (Milbrandt, 2006), and physical education (Pellett & Pellett, 2009). Other studies note the impact of various PDS initiatives such as on the induction of new teachers, the professional development for in-service teachers, efforts to improve K-12 learning, and school-based inquiry (Dangel et al., 2009). These accounts focus on the school-based work of teacher educators from partner universities, the typical conceptualization of PDS partnerships. In this dominant model, "professional development schools blend the resources and expertise of universities and schools to study and develop teachers' instructional practices" (McBee & Moss, 2002, p. 61).

However, little research has been conducted on evaluating the effectiveness of PDS initiatives, and as Reed, Kochan, Ross, and Kunkel (2001) note, less than 25 percent of the existing literature focusing on pre-service and in-service teachers "can be considered to be research or evaluative in nature" (p. 189). Evaluation activities may be limited for a variety of reasons including lack of expertise in evaluation methods among school-based personnel and limited access to external evaluators. Yet, it is likely that the largest obstacles to evaluation are resource challenges, in the form of time and finances, in both K-12 and university contexts.

The purpose of this article is to discuss methods used to assess the development of Professional Development Schools and their progress toward meeting National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) standards. We also seek to highlight the importance and relevance of evaluation in PDS settings. Further, we describe creative ways to inject rigor into current evaluative self-assessment processes given limited resources, and we illustrate our perspective by explaining a collaborative evaluation project implemented by members of our school-university partnership.

Relevant Literature

PDS Evaluation

Reed et al. (2001) note that "PDS evaluations can play an important role in informing, reforming, and transforming how education is defined and enacted" (p. 204). Despite growing recognition of the value of conducting evaluations, there is little evidence of planned evaluation of PDS purposes (Clark, 1996 as cited in Shively & Pribble, 2001). When evaluations are conducted, they typically compare the work of the partnership to the NCATE standards (Shively & Pribble, 2001). Professional Development Schools and their partners are guided in assessment and evaluation procedures by the NCATE *Standards for Professional Development Schools* (NCATE, 2001) and the companion *Handbook for the Assessment of Professional Development Schools* (Teitel, 2001). NCATE outlines five standards with 21 separate elements nested within the standards. Self-assessment practices are encouraged to gauge progress in meeting the standards through the assignment of one of four developmental levels: beginning, developing, at standard, and leading.

The emphasis of the *Handbook* is on the work of the PDS partnership and how the partnership itself reflects each standard. The *Handbook* recommends that each school in a PDS partnership engage in an individual self-study in collaboration with the university partner and then the results of these self-studies can be viewed in aggregate to gain a broad perspective of an overall multi-site partnership. Provided are suggestions of the type of data, such as artifacts from school meetings, that could be useful for self-studies and some general process recommendations; however, this volume falls short of offering specific "how to" procedures for the actual collection, analysis, reporting, and re-investment of the information to strengthen the partnerships and schools themselves.

The literature on self-assessment results is relatively scant. Partnerships may differentially focus on certain standards for self-assessment and recent criticism of the PDS standards mentions the overwhelming focus on institutional structures and teacher development (Breault & Lack, 2009). For instance, a recent review of the PDS literature found almost no mention of the NCATE equity standard and a corresponding lack of data associated with that standard (Breault & Lack, 2009). Of those studies and position papers related to the PDS evaluation process that have been published, several have integrated alterative models of evaluation to help complement the NCATE process (e.g., Gendernalik-Cooper, 2002; Reed et al., 2001; Vare, 2004), citing concerns with the scope and depth of the self-assessment process.

For example, in their model for evaluating the progress of a Professional Development school, Shively and Pribble (2001) outlined four broad criterion themes to determine the extent to which a PDS incorporates PDS principles. One of the themes includes the "extent to which systematic ongoing assessment of movement toward the shared goals is valued and shared by all participants" (p. 284). Vare (2004) used empowerment evaluation principles to guide his evaluation of the alignment of NCATE Standards with those of the National Network for Educational Renewal (NNER) and found that the NCATE self-assessment process fell short of fully representing the voices of the PDS partners and capturing the full extent of the partnership activities and mission.

Importance of Evaluation for Professional Development Schools

Evaluation tools in PDS. Why does evaluation, and self-assessment as a form of evaluation, matter so much in the context of PDS? The establishment and success of a Professional Development School represents a process of development in the pursuit of continuous school improvement. Many perspectives of program evaluation focus on both formative and summative activities of programs, including processes that contribute to implementation and ongoing refinement of the program as well as the eventual outcomes and impacts associated with programs (Patton, 2012).

Formal evaluation outlines specific tools, such as logic models (Kellogg Foundation, 2001), for capturing those nuances of program design and planning, implementation, and program evaluation and strategic reporting. Logic models are used by evaluators to help develop evaluation questions and determine which performance measures are most appropriate for answering those questions. Logic models also provide a way of organizing information about programs and site activities to establish which elements of the program are most important to stakeholders and relevant to the evaluation. The framework provided by a logic model helps orient evaluators, focus conversations amongst evaluators and stakeholders, and most importantly, help frame the evaluation results to tell a story about how site activities directly relate to program performance outcomes (McLaughlin & Jordan, 2004).

Formative and summative evaluation activities often utilize different methods for assessing progress and attainment of goals (Daponte, 2008). For example, formative evaluation may use methods designed to capture multiple perspectives of the stakeholders, such as teachers and parents, involved in processes associated with implementing the program, whereas summative evaluations may tend to focus on quantitative or qualitative indicators of short-, mid-, or long-term outcomes. Without rigorous formative and summative evaluation activities, it is difficult to know what aspects of a program are working well and which aspects require additional attention to positively affect program development. The self-study approach to evaluation framed by the NCATE guidelines tends to judge the work of the partnership in meeting national standards—a more summative approach—rather than evaluating specific processes and activities associated with Professional Development School quality and improvement.

Evaluation in practice in PDS. The lack of literature focused on evaluation of PDS development and progress with respect to the broad

array of PDS activities and outcomes, particularly when self-study is prescribed by the dominant PDS organization, is puzzling. Questions remain about what data collection and analysis techniques are most effective for PDS evaluations; who actually conducts the evaluations; and what impact evaluation results have on improvements in the partnerships and school sites. Although PDS partnerships between universities and schools should yield sufficient expertise in evaluation and methodology procedures to design an effective evaluation, in the interest of maximizing the day-to-day benefits of these partnerships the focus of the partnerships may instead tend more toward teacher preparation (see above). With such emphasis on the practical aspects of teacher education and school improvement, little time and few resources may be available for thoughtful and methodologically sound evaluation procedures. Thus, despite the intent of PDS self-studies to germinate from a collaborative steering committee and focus on the development of the partnership (Teitel, 2001), in practice, the enactment of an NCATE self-study and indeed the focus of the self-study may shift toward the PDS site rather than on the partnership.

Evaluation challenges for PDS. There are implications for the quality and usefulness of evaluation when evaluation is conducted as an afterthought and left only to few members of the school or the PDS partnership. Vare (2004) notes that one of the primary limitations of self-examination may be the lack of objectivity of internal evaluators that stems from having a vested interest in the outcome of an evaluation. Vare (2004) recommends the use of external evaluators to add objectivity to the evaluation. From a more practical perspective, internal evaluators may lack the technical expertise and other resources to conduct a valid and useful evaluation. In the case of a PDS self-study guided more by school administration and staff than by a collaborative partnership, it is unlikely that school personnel would have training needed to adequately design an evaluation, choose appropriate data sources, and analyze the data using qualitative or quantitative methods. Even if school personnel were to have this type of training, which is not typical of most teacher preparation programs, school staff may not have the time to undertake a full evaluation process in addition to their other daily activities. These types of challenges—the use of partnership resources oriented toward development of practice rather than evaluation, the lack of sufficient training in technical aspects of evaluation, and time constraints—may lead to self-studies that are relatively superficial in nature with results that have limited usefulness for school improvement.

The evaluation experiences of our partnership, in particular, with approaches to conducting self-studies, illustrate many of the challenges and issues mentioned above. Our recent experience with our own partnership self-study activities across several schools revealed misconceptions about evaluation and methods used to appropriately enact useful formative and summative evaluation. Across the sites using the NCATE standards to guide self-study activities, the three schools differed in terms of which standard to focus more heavily upon, methods of data collection (e.g., teacher feedback vs. observation), and presentation of the results. Using NCATE standards and self-study guidelines, our partnership struggled with the following: (1) what, exactly, to evaluate (e.g. teacher activities, school initiatives, partnership activities); (2) how to make assessments about change and development of the initiative; (3) from whom data should be collected (e.g., parents, students, teachers, partnership members, administrators, etc.); (4) how to best collect data; and (5) how to use results to inform school improvement.

Our School-University Evaluation Project

Schools within our partnership were using a variety of methods to try and gather information for self-study activities, including methods such as asking teachers to write comments on sticky notes and place those comments

within each NCATE standard to indicate perceived level of the standard. We began to ask ourselves if: (1) these types of methods afforded different stakeholders a genuine opportunity to share their voice about the PDS and if the process were systematic enough to ensure representation of many voices; (2) if the evaluation activities were capable of rigorously informing discussions about PDS implementation and progress; and (3) if the results were actionable, meaning whether they could be re-invested to improve a PDS. Further, it became clear that many self-study activities operated under the assumption that the PDS was developing and progressing in terms of the NCATE standard levels and it was unclear how the self-study activities would be able to effectively challenge that assumption.

Out of concern about these issues, several partnership members decided to implement a project to provide a more systematic approach to the NCATE self-study process. Thus, the impetus for the current project arose from a combination of factors associated with the desire of the school-university partnership for more meaningful and useful self-study results as well as the consideration of how faculty in the College of Education who were not directly involved with teacher preparation programs could add value to the PDS partnership. We share our approach and general findings to demonstrate some ideas as to how to enact evaluation activities in school settings when resources and time are limited in nature.

Context

The University of Nevada Las Vegas (UNLV) College of Education has Professional Development School partnerships with three local schools. The PDS partnership model between the University of Nevada Las Vegas College of Education and the three participating schools is characterized by three principal goals. These goals include joint participation in teacher education, sustaining continuous professional development for school and university staff, and joint participation in field-based research. The partnership is governed by a Coordinating Council, which sets an annual agenda for joint activities and meets regularly to discuss ongoing activities. This Council includes a university and a school site coordinator for each school, as well as a variety of representatives from the Clark County School District (CCSD) in Southern Nevada, the university, and the community.

One of these schools, Dean Petersen Professional Development School, provides the context for the current project. Dean Petersen Professional Development School opened seven years ago, and is located approximately two miles from the center of a large urban area. The student population in this at-risk elementary school (PK – 5) consists of 685 students from diverse backgrounds: 68% Hispanic, 20% African American, 9% Caucasian. In addition, 68% of the students are identified as English Language Learners, 94% receive free or reduced lunch, and there is a 45% transiency rate. Currently, the school's AYP status is Year 3/Needs Improvement. The school's location close to UNLV has allowed numerous partnerships to be formed that support the needs of both the university and the school.

The relationship between Dean Petersen PDS and our College of Education includes the four cornerstones of school-university partnerships as outlined by McBee and Moss (2002): initial teacher preparation, continued professional development, student learning, and research into teaching and learning. The majority of this school-based work is conducted by university faculty members from the teacher preparation program. In addition to this more typical work of the partnership that is led by teacher educators, we wanted to explore ways to involve more members of the university.

The planning for the current project—the "partnership"—involved the University and

Site coordinators for Petersen PDS, the PDS principal, and two faculty representatives from the UNLV Department of Educational Psychology and Higher Education, which is not directly involved in pre-service teacher preparation. These members worked together to identify evaluation needs, determine the scope of the evaluation, educate student evaluators on general PDS activities and the specific history and aims of Petersen PDS, and collect data relevant to the evaluation. Additional details are outlined in the following section.

The Evaluation Project

Process

This article is not meant as a comprehensive "how to" for conducting a systematic and meaningful evaluation of a PDS. Rather, this section describes the processes associated with the emergence and execution of new activities for a PDS partnership in one location. Through this process description, we aim to discuss the challenges and benefits of embarking on a school-university evaluation partnership and hope that other partnerships can learn from our experiences.

Project Team

The primary team members involved with this project were two university faculty members from the Educational Psychology and Higher Education Department housed in the College of Education (also the first two authors of this article) and the principal from Dean Petersen PDS described previously. The university faculty are departmental representatives to two (out of three) different PDSs in this school district and, as such, sit on the PDS council for this partnership area. One faculty member has been the representative to the Professional Development School involved with this project for five years and has experience in teaching and conducting qualitative research methods. The other faculty member is a junior member of the department and has served as a representative to another PDS in the district for two years and has broad experience in evaluation. The PDS principal has fifteen years of administrative experience and has been the current principal at the PDS for three years.

Project Development

Impetus. During the spring of 2009, PDS council members dedicated a portion of their meeting to discussion of self-study evaluation procedures. In addition to document review, schools offered a variety of methods to collect data on staff perceptions, including the use of a board located in a teacher lounge on which staff could indicate the types of activities they had engaged with throughout the year that were relevant to particular NCATE self-study standards. As Educational Psychology faculty, we recognized an opportunity to become more involved in the partnership by utilizing our methodology skills to assist schools in developing more effective evaluation methods.

When broached at the meeting, partnership members were supportive of this idea, but the concept remained vague. The faculty members discussed possible ideas and determined that the best course of action might be to work initially with just one school site. This was determined to be a better way to uncover school needs and develop appropriate procedures that could provide useful information to schools. The faculty then discussed the possibility of working together on a small evaluation project with the principal of one PDS who indicated interest and support.

In a near simultaneous event, the fall 2009 university course schedule was released and the faculty members found that the more junior member would be teaching a graduate level evaluation methods course and the more senior faculty member would be teaching a graduate level interviewing course on the same evening at the same time. We discussed course content and class projects and determined that it would be beneficial to collaborate on a common course project involving an evaluation at the PDS. The goal for treating the evaluation as a collaborative class project was to provide students with real

world experience in both evaluation and interviewing techniques. The majority of students in both courses were upper-level graduate students in programs for training in educational leadership, educational psychology, and curriculum and instruction. This type of project, then, can also serve to broaden the range of "partners" involved with the PDS. Graduate students who may have completed their undergraduate degrees in other locations or outside of teacher training would be unfamiliar with the PDS model and not normally participate in school-university partnership activities.

Action. We then contacted another faculty member who serves as the PDS liaison with ideas for the evaluation and after some discussion, it was confirmed that the NCATE standards for PDS schools would provide a good structure for the students while conducting the project, but also because the methods and results would be useful and practical for assisting school staff. However, the team recognized that the brief duration for the project allotted within the time constraints of a semester-long course would be best suited by selecting one or two of the NCATE standards, rather than attempting to address all standards. Throughout the spring and summer semesters, the two university faculty members met to develop the courses and collaborative class project.

By the time the fall semester began, the class project was focused as a "mini-evaluation" addressing only elements of standard one of the NCATE standards. The original intent was to assess four elements of standard one, "Learning Community," but student interest and class size led to the formation of three groups. The three groups formed around the following elements of standard one: (1) support multiple learners, (2) develop a common shared professional vision, and (3) extended learning community. Members from each class served as "experts" in their respective areas during initial meetings (see the Steps section for more information).

Scope. The decision to limit the evaluation scope was based on two premises related to the university courses: (a) a narrow focus would enable the students and evaluation team to refine the methods that would be best able to evaluate NCATE standards and would be potentially transferrable to school staff, and (b) the mini-evaluation was intended to be an application of course content, which would need to be taught before students were ready to use their new skills in the evaluation setting. We were also concerned that attempting a larger, more comprehensive project in a short amount of time without well-established procedures might place an excessive burden on school staff participating in data collection, particularly when one goal of this project was to kindle interest and support for collaborative evaluation processes associated with the PDS self-study. Placing high demands on school staff during the initial steps could inhibit buy-in for future evaluation projects and skill development.

Project Steps

Planning for the evaluation project began immediately in the fall semester, and included preparation within individual courses and more detailed planning when the two classes met collaboratively on three separate occasions. The project steps are described below.

Preparation by individual courses. Background knowledge development and organizational steps were taken by each group in individual classes in order to prepare for the first combined meeting of both classes. At the first meeting of the combined groups, the evaluation class was responsible for presenting a logic model of their group element, detailing the school resources and processes surrounding the element. In this project, logic models were used to assist in program evaluation and reporting (see Appendix A for an example). The evaluation class also served as the experts on basic information about Professional Development Schools in general and the history of this particular site. The interviewing course presented basic focus group procedures and acted as guides for the development of focus group questions and processes.

To prepare for the initial meeting, the evaluation students accessed various sources to

gain knowledge of the PDS system and the school site. Initial document review sources included, but were not limited to, the *NCATE Standards for Professional Development Schools* (2001), *What it Means to be a Professional Development School* (2008), the Memorandum of Understanding for the partnership between the participating school district and university, the annual academic progress data for the site from 2006–2009, and the school website. Students also accessed the internet for resources related to PDSs and many spoke informally to colleagues who were either employed by Professional Development Schools or were familiar with the concept.

Following the initial document review, the principal of the PDS site visited the evaluation class and spoke at length about the history of the PDS site, her vision for the PDS, and past self-study activities. Students asked clarification and exploration questions to better understand school processes. Following this session, the principal made additional documents available for students, including the results of a previous school-conducted NCATE self-study and aggregate staff demographic information. From these sources, the evaluation students created initial logic models focusing on school processes and implementation activities to help guide the development of evaluation questions and data collection.

The interviewing class was asked to develop a preliminary plan for conducting the focus groups to review with the program evaluation class during the first collaborative meeting. These preliminary plans were intended to address design issues and to address potential interview content. Groups were asked to follow Morgan's (1997) description of the Funnel Approach, where each focus group begins with a less structured approach and then moves toward a more structured discussion of specific questions. We developed a common first question for all focus groups (i.e., "One of the things we're interested in is the work of the partnership between the university and the PDS. What can you tell us about that?"). Small groups were then asked to develop two to four additional questions based on the particular element of standard one for which they were responsible. Several of the students in the interviewing class were not familiar with the work of PDSs and it was necessary to review information about the standards. Finally, students from the interviewing class were asked to consider roles and responsibilities for moderating the discussion. Following the advice of Morgan (1997) students were reminded to include in their plans ideas for the following elements: 1) opening the discussion by addressing ground rules, such as one person speaking at a time, 2) continuing the discussion by ensuring that all focus group participants had opportunities to respond to the questions, and 3) concluding the discussion by asking each person to give a final summary statement.

Collaborative meetings. Three collaborative meetings involving all students from the evaluation and interviewing classes were held at the school site and focused on evaluation planning, data collection, and data analysis, respectively. The planning session involved a peer instruction process and planning for the data collection using materials developed by individual courses. The evaluation class presented the background of PDS and the initial logic model developed for each group. The interview class presented a small tutorial on the process of focus groups and a focus group guide for the class project that that was intended to meet the central objective of focus group interviewing – allowing for each participant to give some meaningful response (Morgan, 1997). Collaboratively, the students developed and refined the relevant focus group questions and assigned roles for the actual focus groups. Students were encouraged to exchange contact information and continue to refine their processes for the upcoming data collection either via group meetings or electronic communication.

Two weeks after the planning session, the data collection session occurred. Students arrived at the school site to conduct focus groups with school staff. The principal of the PDS facilitated the recruitment of a diverse set of focus group participants from school faculty.

Teachers and other professional staff members agreed to participate in focus groups for a variety of reasons expressed to the principal and evaluation team members, including interest in the process, a desire to have their voices heard in a forum that did not have any potential negative repercussions, the availability of pizza provided by the school, and convenience, since the focus groups fell shortly after parent-teacher conferences. Each focus group met in a separate location at the PDS. Focus groups lasted approximately 60 to 90 minutes and consisted of between six and eight teachers. The focus group sessions were audio recorded with participant permission and students recorded field notes during the session.

In preparation for the third collaborative meeting, the data analysis session, the interviewing students listened to their recorded focus groups and then implemented a common analysis strategy. Students were directed to conduct a thematic analysis and to develop three to five themes consisting of summary statements and explanations (Rubin & Rubin, 2007). Following procedures outlined by Rubin and Rubin (2007), students listened to the text and marked passages that were interesting; organized excerpts from the recording into categories; searched for connecting threads and patterns within and between the categories; and summarized these connections into explanatory statements representative of emergent themes. Evaluation students were asked to review their field notes and consider possible themes and illustrative descriptions that could contribute to the discussion at the analysis meeting. In particular, the evaluation students were tasked with thinking about how the data pertained to the expressed goals of the mini-evaluation and how the data could be used to assist the site in school improvement.

The data analysis session took place at the school site one week after the focus groups were conducted. Each small group discussed the themes generated from the interviewing class and corroborated these findings with data with the field notes. Following the data analysis meeting, the evaluation class compiled the results for use in the mini-evaluation reports.

Reporting

Evaluation students were responsible for compiling a report that met class expectations but also generated useful information for the school site. This included revising each logic model based on data collected throughout the evaluation project. The most salient aspect of the reporting procedures were instructions to focus on providing feedback on staff experiences at the PDS and views as to where the PDS stood in the NCATE process; how this information could be useful for the school in mapping their implementation progress as a PDS according to NCATE standards; and offering suggestions for methods and data sources that the school could use for continuous monitoring of school processes.

The reports in their entirety, minus student self-reflections and focus group transcripts (to protect the privacy of focus group participants), were sent to the site principal at the beginning of the spring semester. A research brief summarizing the overall findings was prepared by an evaluation class student, under the direction of the evaluation course instructor, and sent to the school later in that semester. This brief included the logic models developed by the evaluation teams. The research brief was intended for dissemination to school staff and the larger PDS council members for their use as internal stakeholders, to highlight the collaborative nature of the project, and to emphasize the importance of school staff voice in the evaluation process.

Findings

The mini-evaluation projects focused on three elements of standard one (supporting multiple learners, shared professional vision, and extended learning community). However, the resulting evaluation reports demonstrated how a more systematic program evaluation led to findings that were not captured by the

self-study approach to evaluation. In the next section of the paper, we briefly describe the themes addressed by each of the three groups in their evaluation reports.

Supporting multiple learners. Two key findings were reported within the evaluation report that assessed supporting multiple learners. As noted in this report:

> It was clear from the focus group session that the teachers could not clearly identify that the term "multiple learners" as defined in NCATE standards referred to K-5 students, student teacher interns, PDS teachers themselves, community members, and parents. The focus group more closely related the term "multiple learners" to K-5 students, learning differences, and multiculturalism concepts.

For example, one of the teachers stated that multiple learners referred to the idea that students were all at different levels. The second key finding identified in the evaluation report was related to a perceived lack of teacher voice: "The teachers also would like to feel that their voices are being valued and listened-to, and that they have an opportunity to be involved collaboratively in the decision-making process."

Shared professional vision. The primary finding from the evaluation of shared professional vision was that although the school's vision statement was posted in all classrooms and common area, participants in the focus group did not have a clear understanding of the vision statement or how it was developed. One of the teachers stated that "someone came in and said 'this is your shared vision.'" The participants in this focus group felt that a small group of teachers were involved in most of the decision-making related to the PDS. Additionally, participants felt that the university was not clearly communicating how research projects were related to the shared vision. Participants did not feel that the university "adequately shared the purpose of their practices or the results of their research, as data were gathered from *their* students in *their* classrooms."

Extended learning community. Finally, the group that evaluated extended learning community noted that teachers had difficulty defining stakeholders in such a community:

> It was discovered that Petersen PDS did not have a clear definition of "extended learning community." The goals and objectives for how Petersen PDS would meet the standards were not well articulated. Based on a previous self-assessment, Petersen PDS appeared to conceptualize "extended learning community" as after school programs, which have been implemented over the years. However, the program theory based on the analysis of data did not seem to align with the standard or the focus group teachers' conceptualization of the NCATE guideline.

Overall, teachers were positive about many aspects of the partnership: fresh ideas and perspectives from university interns; the involvement of the broader university community in utilizing facilities for instructional purposes; partnership activities undertaken by a faculty member to support student writing across the curriculum and grade levels; and a partnership grant for integrating math and writing. It was clear, however, that focus group participants were not familiar with the elements of standard one that were evaluated. In most cases, teachers had difficulty defining the standard's elements and in describing how the partnership's activities were related to the element.

Discussion

Based on our review of the literature, we found little evidence of systematic evaluation devoted to understanding and improving professional development school progress toward NCATE standards. In considering that NCATE self-study results tend to lead to summative conclusions about standard attainment, rather than providing formative information that can be used to chart a path

toward PDS improvement, we urge school and university partners to consider including established techniques from the field of program evaluation to their evaluation efforts. Yet, we recognize the many challenges to expanding evaluation efforts at school sites.

By using our own mini-evaluation project as an illustration, we describe one way to broaden the school-university collaboration of PDS partnerships and enhance the rigor of self-assessment procedures during times of limited resources for evaluation. Although the project was limited in size, scope, and duration, all of the project members felt that it offers promise for the growth of evaluation procedures at the PDS site that complement existing self-assessment procedures. Looking to alternative models of evaluation of Professional Development School sites (Shively & Pribble, 2001; Vare, 2004) may offer guidance for future evaluation activities that involve both school and university partnership members.

Recommendations

Involve multiple school members. The project team recognized that this initial evaluation process had many limitations and we plan to continue to work together to refine our partnership activities. One major limitation of the initial process was the involvement of the site administrator in evaluation planning, but no other staff, such as teachers. Vare (2004) highlighted the importance of gathering perspectives from multiple voices, such as teachers, during the evaluation process. As evidenced through our initial activities, teachers did not necessarily have an adequate understanding of the PDS model and felt that their voices were not always present in decision-making and assessment related to the PDS process. We recommend that several committed and interested PDS staff be identified as evaluation site leaders who may participate in university courses related to evaluation and data collection and analysis. Their job at the site would be to reinforce the components of the PDS model and the role of self-assessment and evaluation in improving the PDS through site professional development sessions and through coordination and application of the evaluation principles during the process.

Ongoing evaluation is necessary. We further recommend that the improvement of evaluation activities at the PDS be an ongoing process extending over multiple years. If evaluation is conducted within the framework of graduate level courses, which is one way to encourage evaluation activities when limited resources exist, then the first semester should be spent teaching and learning about evaluation processes. The first semester should also involve more in-depth immersion into the PDS for course students and professional development in uses of evaluation data collection and analysis procedures for school site staff. Within this first semester course, students should develop evaluation questions in conjunction with school partners and then form a plan for conducting an evaluation of the implementation of school processes during the second semester. A multi-year process would help establish trust between school-based and university-based members of the evaluation partnership, allow for a broader and deeper level of graduate student involvement in school-university partnerships by including students in programs other than teacher preparation, and foster the production of increasingly rigorous and sophisticated formative and summative evaluation. We feel that finding creative ways to support self-study procedures and viewing such activities in terms of formal evaluation will yield transparent, participatory, and useful information vital for the development of both the university and school sides of the partnership. SUP

Appendix A: Logic Model from Extended Learning Community Report

Constituency Group	*How Program is Delivered*			*Why – Results of the Program*		
	Resources	*Activities*	*Outputs*	*Short-term Outcome*	*Intermediate Outcome*	*Long-Term Outcome*
Family	Collaborations with community members	Clothing donations	Clothing for families and students	Basic needs are met	If basic needs are met, families can focus on learning	A sense of collaboration and possible motivation to persist in education
Family	Family Center	Programs to facilitate family needs	Language programs for parents	Increased native language skills	A better understanding of native language and a sense of accomplishment	Increased confidence to be a parent and participate in school activities.
Family	Grants and volunteers	Preschool	Students have a key entry point into primary education	More socialized students in Kindergarten	Students who are closer to grade level performance	Students are prevented from remedial education
Students	Teacher leaders	Extracurricular Activities	Art club, student council	To enhance student involvement and explore interests	Increase sense of community and school pride	Develop long-term student interests in careers and community
Teacher	Colleagues at other PDS	Sharing of resources and professional development	Teachers with a knowledge of various resources and topics	Increased teacher usage of new teaching methods from other teacher resources and formalized trainings	A sense of collegiality and teamwork amongst PDS teachers	Potential reduced staff turnover.
Teacher	Collaboration with College of Education	Interns	Future teachers at PDS	Teachers are well prepared to enter the profession	Administrators have a teacher that is a few years ahead in development	A well-established teacher leader.

Contextual variables – Factors outside the control of the school that impact constituency groups

92% of students on free & reduced lunch, High transiency rate (44.6%), 72% Hispanic population & large ELL population, Parents who cannot read or write in native language, All students live in weekly & monthly apartments across the street from school, A young school (opened in 2003), Students have little socialization to school, Teacher contracts for workload (7 hour, 11 minute days), 25% staff change in 3 years

Note. The logic model included for this mini-evaluation represents a start, rather than an end point. Further evaluation is recommended to develop a more in-depth and definitive logic model. Examples are included, but this is not an exhaustive model.

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Gwen Marchand is a Lincy assistant professor in the Department of Educational Psychology and Higher Education at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Her teaching and research interests include evaluation methods and student engagement.

Lori Olafson is a professor in the Department of Educational Psychology and Higher Education at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas where she teaches qualitative research methods.

Susan Steaffens was the principal of Dean Petersen PDS in Las Vegas, Nevada for four years. She currently serves as the Director of Title I Services for the Clark County School District.