Teacher Perceptions of Reading Intervention Conducted by Teacher Candidates in a PDS Partnership: Links to the Nine Essentials

Christopher Kennedy, Ohio University

ABSTRACT: As part of clinical models of teacher preparation, PDS models provide extra adults who are invested in education in the classroom environment. Administrators and school leaders sometimes look for innovative ways to use teacher candidates to provide additional intervention to support students who need extra help. This article analyzes one such PDS structure in which teacher candidates conduct K-3 reading intervention. Mentor teacher interviews are used to determine the effectiveness of the program and to provide connections to the essentials of PDS work.

Nine Essentials Addressed: 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; 2. A school–university culture committed to the preparation of future educators that embraces their active engagement in the school community; 3. Ongoing and reciprocal professional development for all participants guided by need; 4. A shared commitment to innovative and reflective practice by all participants; 6. An articulation agreement developed by the respective participants delineating the roles and responsibilities of all involved; 7. A structure that allows all participants a forum for ongoing governance, reflection, and collaboration; 9. Dedicated and shared resources and formal rewards and recognition structures.

With continual pressure on public schools to succeed academically, paired with dwindling funding, districts look to various resources to provide extra help needed to make academic gains (Bier et al., 2012). Mandates that call for students to reach grade level reading benchmarks by the end of third grade add to pressure that teachers feel. Districts often look to individuals who do not have teacher licenses to conduct in-school interventions for students who are lagging behind grade level. Similar models of reading intervention have become commonplace due to unfunded mandates.

These interventions often take students out of the regular classroom during different content area instruction. Thus, students either miss the content altogether or must catch up on their own. While educators see the need for their students to be competent in terms of literacy, they often struggle to justify having their students miss valuable content time. It is even more difficult to justify pulling students out of the classroom when the intervention is conducted by people without teaching credentials (Allington, 2013). Many teachers are reluctant to send their students to these sessions. They often express the better option would be to keep these readers in the classroom. Districts lacking the funds to hire licensed teachers for such reading interventions look to classroom volunteers or paraprofessionals to conduct intervention programming. In most cases, they have little training in the programming and very limited teaching experience. Administrators must decide how they will provide the best possible learning opportunities for their P-12 students who need extra help given limited resources and time.

In the meantime, colleges of teacher preparation are looking to provide more clinical experiences in their programs. An in-depth clinical model that connects theory to practice provides a more realistic experience for teacher candidates. It gets them into the classroom and provides authenticity to their training (NCATE Blue Ribbon Panel, 2010). The clinical model provides more adults in the classroom who are knowledgeable and invested in education. More adults in the classroom can provide more support to the students in the class. It can allow mentor teachers to differentiate instruction for individual students. With more adults in the room, the classroom can be more easily managed. Mentor teachers and teacher candidates can bounce ideas off each other. This additional reflection of their instruction and mentoring can help create new and innovative lessons that help teachers develop a sense of renewal (NCATE Blue Ribbon Panel, 2010). It provides a community of educational discourse where practice is constantly reflected on and discussed (Levine, 2010). However, one of the big issues that teachers have with participation in the clinical model is the time involved with mentoring. Many teachers refuse to take teacher candidates for their field experiences due to the additional time needed to provide support. Communicating, modeling, and evaluating are all tasks added to the already busy schedule of today's classroom teacher.

With the time issue in mind, many teachers have pointed to the added pressure of state mandates for their refusal to welcome teacher candidates in the classroom. Mandated tests cause pressure to show that their class is making expected gains. In many instances, teacher evaluations and district funding are

dependent on the results of these assessments. Thus, teachers feel that their classroom students need their full attention. They feel that no time can be afforded to the teacher candidate to complete methods course assignments, such as teaching lessons. Therefore, getting teachers to adhere to the clinical model can often be a challenge.

However, the benefits of the clinical model may far outweigh the negatives. Clinical model networks, like the PDS, are becoming increasingly popular (AACTE Clinical Practice Commission, 2018; Brindley et al., 2008). Indications that these models provide more experience and more reflection are becoming more evident (AACTE Clinical Practice Commission, 2018). Also, school districts searching for volunteers to provide more support for struggling readers look to teacher preparation programs. Thus, tutoring with the assistance of teacher candidates appears to be a natural fit. Being highly invested in their educational futures, aspiring teachers could provide sharper focus to the work. With the constant reminder of the connection of reading theory with teaching practice, teacher candidates could be better able to apply what they know.

While teacher candidates share the commonality of not having a teaching license with other volunteer tutors, the extra incentive of the opportunity that assists in furthering their career, plus the evaluative aspects of coursework can provide the motivation to go above and beyond. However, with a lack of experience and no teaching license, teachers and administrators could remain apprehensive about sending their struggling students to intervention in such a model. While there appears to be many benefits to the extended field experiences that the PDS partnerships provide, it remains unclear if these intervention models are valued by all parties (AACTE Clinical Practice Commission, 2018).

Purpose

There have been instances where intervention for students who are struggling academically have benefitted from teacher candidate-led intervention (Haverback & Parault, 2008; Peters, 2011). Research has shown that teacher candidates have greatly benefitted from the experience of conducting intervention. Aspects of PDS work have been credited for the success of such models (Haverback & Parault, 2008; Peters, 2011). The researcher for the current study found limited documentation about the teacher perceptions of teacher candidate-led intervention in a PDS partnering school. However, with teacher accountability becoming increasingly prevalent, teachers will become even more concerned about maximizing their students' learning. Thus, administrators and PDS leaders need to take teacher input into account. Teachers that find value in teacher candidate-led intervention programming will be more willing to participate in this important work that improves teacher education. Teachers and administrators need to trust that the time spent is valuable.

The purpose of the study was to gain insight into mentor teachers' perceptions of teacher candidate conducted intervention in a PDS partnership. The research was geared to provide the perceptions of mentor teachers in hopes of potentially improving similar models. The study investigated the perceptions of mentor teachers on student achievement, teacher preparation, and their own teaching practices. Thus, the investigation gives insight as to whether such an intervention approach should be considered by administrators, mentor teachers, and colleges of teacher preparation.

Method

Research Design

Since the teacher candidate-led intervention program in the PDS is a unique program, a qualitative case study approach was used for this research. Case studies allow the researcher to study phenomenon in its own context (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Yin (2009) speaks of the value of case studies to provide more insight and paint a detailed picture into correlations that may be too difficult to study otherwise. Multiple variables may be possible links to the success or failure of intervention programming. Since this investigation sought to determine the perceived effectiveness of intervention programming within just one PDS model, a case study was deemed an appropriate mode of study that allowed the researcher to dig deeper into contributive factors.

Interviews were conducted with mentor teachers in the PDS partnership school. A standard open-ended interview format was adopted. This format required a standardized set of questions that allowed for more focus and efficient analysis of the results (Patton, 2002). Questions were designed to gain mentor teachers' perceptions of the programming that is being conducted by teacher candidates in the PDS. Mentor teachers were asked to reflect on the perceived effectiveness of the intervention in terms of academic gains of their students, mentoring teacher benefits, and teacher candidate preparation.

Research Site

The site for this study is a K-6 elementary school in a university town in Ohio. The school is one of four elementary schools in the district. The school has roughly 370 students with three classrooms per grade level. This particular school has an established early childhood education PDS partnership with the college of education within the local university that started in 2011. While this partnership has existed for four years prior to the mentor teacher interviews in 2016, the district has had PDS partnering agreements with the university for nearly 30 years. As a part of this partnership, junior level teacher candidates are placed in each K-3 classroom for two full days a week for the entire school year as part of their extensive clinical experiences. Teacher candidates are required to teach lessons in these

classrooms using strategies that they are learning in their various teaching methods courses. Thus, these teacher candidates are active members of the classroom environment.

The K-3 teachers serve as mentors to the teacher candidates and provide necessary feedback required to become reflective teachers. PDS teacher candidates are required to take a seminar course designed to reflect on their experience in the field. Content of the seminar course is differentiated to fit the needs of the teacher candidates, current trends in education, and the needs of the individual school.

Each PDS partnership at this university has two key members that provide the necessary structure: the Teacher Liaison and the Faculty Coordinator. The teacher liaison is a teacher in the partnering school. They are the person in the school that teacher candidates can go to, while in the school, to ask questions and to address issues that may arise. The liaison provides communication to the mentoring teachers. The faculty coordinator is the university connection for the teacher candidates. They keep faculty up to date with the partnership. The faculty coordinator and teacher liaison work closely to provide the best possible experiences for the teacher candidates. For the research site, the teacher liaison was a third-grade teacher, while the faculty coordinator was a member of the reading education faculty. These formal roles are considered boundary spanning roles in that these people work in both the university and the P-12 settings (AACTE Clinical Practice Commission, 2018). The NAPDS identifies such formal roles as essential in the structure of PDS partnerships (Brindley et al., 2008).

Another key aspect of PDS partnership programming is the plan of work. Each partnering school in the PDS network in the district is encouraged to develop a plan of work. The plan of work is designed to provide support for current needs or initiatives that are unique to each PDS. The need that is unique to this school was reading intervention. The school being studied was not a Title I school; thus, funding that is allocated to schools in high poverty areas and sometimes used to provide additional teachers for intervention for struggling readers was not available. The school PDS partnership developed a plan that would allow the teacher candidates to receive training in Leveled Literacy Intervention (LLI).

LLI is a comprehensive, researched based reading intervention program that is designed to meet the differentiated needs of struggling readers (Heinemann, 2015). Funding was procured via a small grant from the college of education and the school's Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) to purchase necessary materials. Once trained, teacher candidates conduct reading intervention services to small groups of struggling readers with no more than three per group. Students receive instruction twice a week for 30-minute blocks. This programming provides extra reading help to 50-60 students who otherwise may not receive such support.

Students in grades 1, 2, and 3 are selected for the intervention through screening assessments done by the mentor teachers at the beginning of the school year.

Kindergarten intervention begins in January after the mentor teachers are able to track some progress. Therefore, kindergarten teachers are better able to determine if typical classroom instruction is working before determining which students could use the extra instruction. After data are gathered, the teacher liaison breaks the students into groups using the data provided. Once the teacher candidates are assigned groups, they are responsible for providing instruction, monitoring progress, and differentiating instruction. They consult with the teacher liaison, classroom teachers, and the faculty coordinator to assist when necessary.

Participants

Seven mentor teachers (one Kindergarten, two first grade, two second grade, and two third grade) at the school were interviewed to determine the perceptions on the teacher candidate-led intervention program. Each teacher had students in their classrooms that were pulled for the intervention during 30-minute blocks every Tuesday and Thursday. Also, every teacher participated in the PDS partnership by mentoring teacher candidates from the university.

Interviews

The mentor teacher interviews were conducted to gain insight on the perceived positive and negative aspects of the PDS teacher candidate conducted reading intervention. Interviews were scheduled for 45 minute time slots and were based on mentor teacher availability. Interviews were audio recorded and transcribed for detailed analysis at a later date. The researcher set a target of 6-10 mentor teacher interviews to be done. Interviews were conducted until data saturation was achieved. In hopes to gain perspectives at multiple grade levels, a sample size of at least six would allow for interviews from all the grade levels involved with the intervention programming. For this study, saturation occurred when seven mentor teachers had completed the interviews. After each interview, the researcher wrote a reflective summary of the interview that allowed the researcher to determine that no new themes were emerging and saturation had occurred. Each interview lasted approximately 20-30 minutes a piece.

The faculty coordinator served as the lead researcher for this study. At the time of the study, the coordinator was in the fifth year of working in this capacity. He had developed rapport with the teachers. Thus, the hope was that the interviews would be conversational. A focused interview design allowed the interviews to stay on topic while allowing for the fresh take of the perception of the mentor teachers. The conversational nature of the design provided flexibility to follow up on the different perceptions of the participants. Questions were semi-structured with probes that allowed for clarification.

Participating mentor teachers were given a list of the interview questions at least one week prior to their scheduled interview. This gave the participants a chance to reflect on their

thoughts on the topic prior to the interview. By providing a chance to review the questions, the participants could provide a more thorough reflection of their perceptions of the intervention programming.

Data Analysis

Saldaña (2009) recommends that interview transcripts go through at least two cycles of analysis. For this study, the researcher incorporated a precoding phase prior to the two cycles of coding. The precoding phase of the transcript analysis was simply an initial reading of the transcripts. The researcher gained a general idea of the content of the main thoughts of the participants. Also, words, concepts, or quotes that are striking to the researcher were highlighted and noted. Saldaña (2009) suggests that the preliminary work is valuable for identification of various categories for coding.

First cycle of coding. After the preliminary procedures, the researcher engaged in the first phase of coding. This phase of coding consisted of three potential types of coding: descriptive, structural coding, and attribute. Descriptive coding was used to set the primary categories of the responses to questions and provided a lexicon of concepts for more detailed analysis. It provided the structure and led to even further sub codes within these emerging categories (Saldaña, 2009). The categories that were identified in the study were program logistics, differentiation, influence on K-3 students, collaboration, influence on teacher candidates, influence on mentor teachers, and background knowledge.

The second portion of the first cycle was structural coding. This particular coding strategy provided a quantitative aspect to the study through the counting of each emerging category. Through the frequency of categories of responses, the researcher could draw conclusions as to the perceived perceptions of the teachers. Common responses could potentially reveal the attributes of the program that are perceived to be effective. The analysis provided by structural coding was very helpful when determining if aspects of the responses are PDS related or not. The categories that were previously mentioned were listed in order of most frequent to least frequent.

The third portion of the cycle involved attribute coding. Coding of this nature can provide a context for analysis. At the start of the interview, the researcher asked a series of demographic questions designed to provide additional information that aided in analysis of data. In this study, attribute coding data was used to determine any trends in the answers of the mentor teachers. This lens helped the researcher look for trends via grade level, experience, etc. There were no distinct trends identified through this process in this study.

Second cycle of coding. After categories were developed, counted, and analyzed by attribute in the first cycle of coding, the second cycle of coding could begin. This cycle dug deeper into the transcripts in hopes to find common themes and to develop potential theory (Saldaña, 2009). The two types of

coding that were used in the second cycle are pattern coding and theoretical coding.

Pattern coding involves the analysis of similar passages found in the first cycle of coding in order to help make better sense of the data (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Comparison of the passages result in a pattern code that can be used as a descriptor that can be used to draw conclusions with the data. Hence, careful review of the first cycle coding was necessary to compare like passages and to develop themes (Saldaña, 2009). For this study, the researcher identified similar descriptor codes during the structural coding done during the first cycle. Similar passages were analyzed in order to make pattern codes that help shed light on the effectiveness of the programming and on the influence of the PDS structure on the programming.

The final step for the second cycle is bringing these patterns together in a theoretical framework. This process of theoretical coding provided theories as to the relationship between the findings and the programming. The end result of this coding is a theory about the contributive factors of the findings that may potentially be generalized across similar setting in similar circumstances.

For this study, the researcher looked for links between the intervention programming and the PDS partnership model that aids in the implementation. Connections to the nine essential elements of PDS partnership arrangement were considered during the analysis. These nine essentials of PDS work were established to provide a framework to distinguish PDS work from other partnering arrangements between P-12 schools and schools of teacher preparation (Brindley et al., 2008).

Interview Findings: Connections to the NAPDS Nine Essentials

Mentor teacher reaction to programming was mostly positive with just a few areas that were identified for potential improvement. While the mentor teachers were not asked specifically how the PDS influences the reading intervention, statements made by the teachers during the interviews has led the researcher to conclude that the essential elements that constitute PDS work provide the benefits of the reading intervention. In essence, mentor teachers indirectly pointed to the PDS as the part of the programming that provided the benefits. Many of the nine essentials of a PDS were evident in the work.

Program logistics. Mentor teachers were appreciative that struggling readers were able to get extra help. Many felt that the researched based curriculum, consistency, and longevity of the intervention were strong aspects of the program. Michelle Jackson stated, "I feel like just having time, having the small groups, having the one on one. Just to see them from the beginning of the year to the end of the year." This statement reflects the active engagement in the school (Essential Two) that is an essential piece of the PDS partnership. It also shows that the teacher candidates are a valuable shared resource (Essential Nine) between the university and the school (Brindley et al.,

2008). Teacher candidates filled a void that the school had. Mentor teachers understood the value the shared resource—the teacher candidates—brought to help with school improvement plans.

While consistency was considered a valued aspect of the programming, it was also something that the mentor teachers wished could be improved. Due to coursework required of the teacher candidates, they are not able to be present at the school every day. However, mentor teachers stated this as a potential disadvantage to the program. Melody Hill articulated,

> The only thing that I think would be good to change, this isn't something that could actually happen, is if we could increase the number of days in the week that we have the program. Because our candidates are only two days a week, that's the model that we have to go with.

This statement speaks to the perceived value of the teacher candidate led programming as it also identifies an area for improvement. The mentor teachers value the active engagement of the candidates in the school.

Perhaps the most scrutinized aspect of the program was lack of familiarity with the curriculum that was being used. Mentor teachers were apprehensive about how it aligned with what they were doing in class. They also expressed that their lack of LLI knowledge inhibited them from helping the teacher candidates when they had questions about instruction. NAPDS Essential Four states that PDS work involves "a shared commitment to innovative and reflective practice" (Brindley et al., 2008, p. 5). The PDS culture of the school has afforded the mentor teachers the opportunities to reflect on their own practice as well as the practice of the teacher candidates. Mentor teachers engaging in reflective practices with the teacher candidates has been credited for keeping teachers engaged in improved instructional practices (Bier et al., 2012). Some of the mentor teachers made suggestions that they would like to learn more about the LLI curriculum so that they would be better able to help the teacher candidates through reflection or better align the curriculum to the classroom curriculum.

Since the interviews took place, the administration of the school has switched the curriculum to one that the teachers have identified as one that addresses the students' needs and aligns with what the mentor teachers are using in the classroom. The PDS has provided professional development on the new curriculum for teachers and teacher candidates on a yearly basis. This aligns with NAPDS Essential Three that calls for "ongoing and reciprocal professional development for all participants guided by need" (Brindley et al., 2008, p. 4). The change in curriculum occurred through teacher voice; administrators, the teacher liaison, and the faculty coordinator brought about the change via the suggestions from mentor teachers. This relates to PDS Essential Seven that calls for "structure that allows all participants a forum for ongoing governance, reflection, and collaboration" (Brindley et al., 2008, p. 6).

Differentiation. The purpose of the intervention program is to provide a differentiated experience for the students who are struggling with content. According to Tomlinson (2017), teachers that are able to differentiate various aspects of learning for their students are able to help their students with flexible instruction. Mentor teachers that were interviewed for this study referred often to the way the teacher candidate-led intervention allowed them the opportunity to provide differentiated instruction that catered to the individual needs of their students. Not only were the teachers in the current study able to provide more focused instruction for the students who left the room for the intervention, they were able to provide more focused instruction for the students who stayed in the regular classroom as well.

Perhaps one of the biggest themes that emerged was the difference in student-teacher ratios that were evident due to the teacher candidate-led intervention. With the extra adults that are invested in education, teachers are afforded the ability to work with smaller groups of children on skills that address the students' academic areas of need. Teachers can engage in co-teaching models that can help with differentiation and lower student-teacher ratios (Cook & Friend, 1995). Mentor teachers expressed that the additional adults allowed students to receive instruction that may not otherwise be available to them without the intervention programming.

The National Association for Professional Development Schools' Nine Essentials are evident with the ratio differences that the teacher candidates provide. Essential Nine speaks to shared resources between the university and the P-12 school, while Essential Four references innovative practices that are a result of a PDS (Brindley et al., 2008). With the teacher candidate-led intervention, the teacher candidates themselves are the shared resource that enables the school to provide the extra adults that lead to lower student-teacher ratios. Using teacher candidates to provide differentiated instruction in the school setting constitutes an innovative practice that may not normally occur in similar school settings with the aid of the teacher candidates. As mentor teacher Melody Hill stated, "We're talking about approximately 50 students who are receiving intervention who otherwise would not be receiving this type of targeted intervention if we didn't have the partnership students." Being able to have these future educators present and use their skills in this capacity constitutes an innovative practice that benefits all. Without this shared resource of the teacher candidates, fewer intervention opportunities would be present.

The same mentor teacher's statement (see previous paragraph) can also show evidence of the teacher candidate-led reading intervention providing equity in practice. Without the shared resources, students would not have access to reading intervention that is routinely afforded to students in other schools. Essential One of the NAPDS nine essentials of PDS work speaks to the mission of partnering arrangements to provide equitable opportunities in schools (Brindley et al., 2008). This commitment is evident throughout the program.

Influence on K-3 students. The main purpose of the teacher candidate-led reading intervention is to help students who are lagging behind in terms of literacy skills. For the most part, assessment data did show academic improvement in these students. Mentor teacher commentary did reiterate the academic improvements that were shown. Mentor teachers reported gains in terms of social skills and advances in the students' self-efficacy with reading. Fisher, Frey, and Farnan (2004) noted that teacher candidates in PDS settings had formed relationships with and were more engaged with students in the classroom. In this study, the small group format allowed for even more personal relationships to be formed.

The mentor teachers articulated that they see this programming is helping students make gains toward the specific purpose that is intended. NAPDS Essential One recognizes that a PDS should provide outreach opportunities that bolster education and foster equity within schools (Brindley et al., 2008). As part of the PDS annual plan of work, one mission of the partnership is to provide this reading intervention to students who would not be afforded this opportunity due to lack of resources. With that being said, the evaluation and feedback is a must to verify effectiveness. Other teacher candidate-led interventions have been shown to promote academic gain in a PDS setting (Castle et al., 2008; Jarrett et al., 2010; Cave & Brown, 2010). In this study, the academic data reflects the gain, and the mentor teacher commentary corroborates the data. Grace Carr stated, "I've seen success with the kids that are being pulled out, their fluency is getting better and they're moving up in book levels. I then can work with the other ones, it's hard to reach the high kids sometimes." Thus, mentor teachers reported not only success in terms of the children who are pulled for the intervention, but also the children that remain in the classroom.

Collaboration. One of the cornerstones of PDS partnership work is the collaborative effort of all parties involved in teacher preparation. Essential Seven states that PDS's require "a structure that allows all participants a forum of ongoing governance, reflection, and collaboration" (Brindley et al., 2008, p. 6). During the interviews, mentor teachers spoke of teacher/teacher candidate collaborations, faculty/teacher collaborations, and teacher/teacher collaborations as part of the teacher candidate-led interventions. Mentor teachers commented on reflective conversations that allowed all parties to work toward improving instruction for the K-3 students in the program.

Mentor teacher and teacher candidates. Mentor teacher interviews revealed how valuable the mentor teachers viewed the teacher candidate ideas and the data gathered during the interventions. Mentor teachers revealed that mentor teachers and teacher candidates frequently discussed various aspects of instruction, potential student gains, and various other reflections on learning. This constant communication and collaboration leads to better academic experiences for students both in intervention and in the classroom. Communication and

collaboration that has been attributed to better academic experiences for students in other PDS settings (Bier et al., 2012; Fisher et al., 2004; Shroyer et al., 2007). Grace Carr mentions in her interview,

> It's especially helpful if we have kids that are getting ready to go through the IEP process, putting them kind of on the spot. What can you tell me about so and so's progress, how are they doing. I tend to have them lead that conversation a little bit, so they're the expert in their group.

This statement is a testament to the amount of confidence that the mentor teachers have to the input of the teacher candidates. It reflects the shared commitment to reflection (Essential Four) and input to improving literacy for the students involved in intervention (Brindley et al., 2008). The integration of the PDS candidates into the IEP process shows how active they are in the school. Essential Two speaks to commitment to "active engagement" and "school-university culture" in terms of teacher preparation (Brindley et al., 2008). The value that the mentor teachers see in the teacher candidates for the intervention program and within the classroom show how engrained they are in the school community and how active they are in terms of providing value to student learning. The collaborative efforts between mentor teachers and teacher candidates that occur for the extended field experience in a PDS allow for more reflective practice within a school community (Duquette & Cook, 1999; Stanulis, 1995b).

Mentor teachers and boundary spanners. Mentor teacher interviews also revealed strong collaborative efforts between teachers and those who would be considered boundary spanners in a PDS partnering arrangement. In this PDS arrangement, the roles of teacher liaison and faculty coordinator would be considered boundary spanners since they provide the main connections to the school and university (Howey & Zimpher, 2006). At the time of the study, the teacher liaison was a 3rd grade teacher in the school, and the faculty coordinator was a university faculty member that worked specifically with the school, the mentor teachers, university faculty, and the teacher candidates assigned to the school in an effort to provide valuable teaching and learning experiences for all. Essential Six promotes roles that are part of the agreements determined by the PDS partners (Brindley et al., 2008).

Mentor teachers referred to the interactions with the liaison and coordinator as supportive and valuable. This was evident in the discussions about how the groups were initially formed in the beginning of the year. Mentor teachers spoke to the discussions that determined which children in their classes would benefit the most from the small group literacy instruction. The teacher liaison spoke of "ongoing communication in terms of gathering the data and creating our groups." This continual feedback between parties led to teachers feeling more empowered and motivated. Thus, these school leaders take on a

transformational style of leadership that promotes collaboration (Leithwood, 1992). In some instances, the differing roles can lead to additional stress and potential riffs between coworkers (Howey & Zimpher, 2006; Teitel, 2003). However, there was no indication of any such issues at this setting.

Influence on teacher candidates. Another aspect of the intervention that mentor teachers stated was important to note was the positive impact that it had on the development of the teacher candidates that led the intervention groups. As is evident in the research by Peters (2011), PDS candidates that had a clinical experience with an intervention component gained additional knowledge in assessment and instruction. Mentor teachers in this study reported that the sustained, authentic experience of working with the students went a long way to their preparation as a teacher. Not only did the intervention opportunity provide experience with assessment, management, and instruction, but also attributed to observed gains in teacher self-efficacy. This aligns with research by Helfrich and Bean (2011) that found that teacher candidates who had more field experience felt more prepared to teach reading. A study by Haverback and Parault (2011) revealed that teacher candidates who had intervention experiences as part of their clinical experience felt as though all candidates should have the experience. Many mentor teachers in this study reported that the small group intervention provided a scaffolded experience that started with a small group and progressed into ability and confidence for more whole classroom experiences as the year progressed. Lois Jansen reported,

> I think that it's nice for them, especially their first semester, it's nice for them to have a small group of children first. It's not so overwhelming and intimidating. They end up gaining some confidence in themselves and their teaching.

This active engagement in working with students who struggle with reading instruction provided an excellent laboratory to differentiate instruction. While the curriculum was predetermined, candidates were given some leeway to make adjustments. They monitored progress through assessment, consulted with mentor teachers, and delivered instruction. The school has developed a "culture committed to the preparation of future that embraces their active engagement," which is exactly what NAPDS Essential Two is about. The connection between coursework and classroom experience provides a venue for reflection, which is a part of NAPDS Essential Four. Being able to learn by doing is a big aspect of the PDS partnership (Brindley et al., 2008).

Influence on mentor teachers. While the intended purpose of the intervention was to provide more reading instruction for students needing more support through the use of aspiring teachers as instructors, teachers also stated that they themselves benefited from this as well. Mentor teacher responses to interview questions revealed that they were able to collect more assessment data on their students, which led to more opportunities to provide differentiated instruction. Mentor teachers felt as though they were more reflective about their own teaching practice. They felt the work of the teacher candidates brought new and creative ideas to their classroom.

The PDS structure that embraces the teacher candidates as a valuable asset to student leaning plays a big part in the ability to differentiate the instruction in the eyes of the teachers. One such comment by Grace Carr exemplifies this:

> Well, I think it's great because it's very helpful, we can get to everybody all the time. It's nice to have people that can come and sometimes they see things or pick up on things that we don't necessarily see and pick up on right away…I schedule my intervention a little differently because I'll know that these kids are going to be doing this, working on this. On these days, maybe I can focus on a different skill.

This comment shows NAPDS Essential Seven that speaks to collaboration, Essential One that speaks to the provision of equitable experiences in schools, and Essential Four that refers to reflective practice (Brindley et al., 2008).

This reflection does not stop with just sharing ideas of how to reach a few students. Mentor teachers reported that the work of the teacher candidates provided a sense of simultaneous renewal with their own teaching (Goodlad, Mantle-Bromley, & Goodlad, 2004). Lois Jansen stated,

> I'm a teacher, so I'm a learner. We're able to teach each other, and that's how I want to run my classroom. I want them to know that my classroom is their classroom. It has influenced me to be better at what I do… It kind of drives me to be a better teacher.

It is through the active engagement by the teacher candidates that mentor teachers are able to reflect and learn new strategies and activities. This informal professional development is connected to Essential Four that focuses on reflection and Essential Three that calls for reciprocal professional development (Brindley et al., 2008).

Influence of background knowledge. One factor that seemed to resonate with the teachers who were interviewed was the idea that these teacher candidates were taking coursework that would be valuable to their instruction. The knowledge the teacher candidates were in the process of obtaining licensure meant a great deal to the mentor teachers' perceived success of the program. Mentor teachers indicated that candidates' investment in the field of education was important. Mentor teachers felt that aspiring teachers that would soon be looking for employment were motivated to do their best work to impress their mentors. Mentor teachers felt that being familiar with concepts of assessment, instruction, and management gave teacher candidates the upper hand over intervention possibilities with

volunteers or other non-licensed personnel. Lois Jansen exemplifies this by stating:

> They're (teacher candidates) able to pick that up and understand what we mean, whereas community members, though I'm sure they would try their best to do what they could do, but they just wouldn't have the experience or the background knowledge or any kind of prior knowledge to know where they need to go or where they need to be.

Mentor teacher statements also revealed that extended field experiences provided a venue to get to better know the students. Teacher candidates were able to use this information to differentiate instruction when appropriate. NAPDS Essential Two refers to the culture that takes pride in developing future educators, and Essential Four speaks to reflective practice (Brindley et al., 2008). Both of these essentials are evident in these statements.

Summary

The current trend for colleges of teacher preparation is to prepare future teachers within a clinical model. These models involve more structured field experiences in the P-12 classroom environment that help connect theory to practice. PDS partnerships are one way that P-12 schools and colleges of teacher preparation work together to provide such experiences. These reciprocal relationships are structured in a way that is beneficial to all parties involved. NAPDS has provided a list of nine essential elements that exemplify PDS work. This case study highlights the teacher perceptions of a reading intervention program that is conducted by teacher candidates in a PDS partnership setting.

The results of the study indicate that the teacher candidate-led intervention program is a valuable part of the school's academic plan. Pre- and post-reading assessment data shows that the students that participated in the program made gains in terms of foundational literacy skills. Mentor teacher interviews indicated that teachers were positive about the impacts that teacher candidate-led intervention is having on student learning, the preparation of the teacher candidates, and their own teaching. Mentor teachers indirectly indicated that the essential elements of the PDS partnership arrangement as keys to the success of the teacher candidate-led intervention program.

This study shows that a PDS partnership can make a positive impact on the students in the P-12 school. At the same time, the partnering arrangements can also lead to more collaborative, effective instruction by all parties involved. The essential elements of a PDS provide flexibility that allow administrators and leaders to address the various needs of a school. Adherence to the essential elements of PDS is a key to the success. These reciprocal relationships should be fostered for the betterment of all involved. SUP

References

AACTE Clinical Practice Commission. (2018). *A pivot toward clinical practice, its lexicon, and the renewal of educator preparation.* Washington, DC: Author.

Allington, R. L. (2013). What really matters when working with struggling readers. *Reading Teacher, 66*(7), 520-530. http://doi.org/10.1002/TRTR.1154

Baxter, P., & Jack, S. (2008). Qualitative case study methodology: Study design and implementation for novice researchers. *The Qualitative Report Volume, 13*(4), 544-559. http://doi.org/10.2174/1874434600802010058

Bier, M. L., Horn, I., Campbell, S., Kazemi, E., Hintz, A., Kelley-Peterson, M., ... Peck, C. (2012). Designs for simultaneous renewal in university-public school partnerships: Hitting the "sweet spot." *Teacher Education Quarterly*, 127-141.

Brindley, R., Field, B. E., & Lessen, E. (2008). *What it means to be a professional development school.* NAPDS.

Castle, S., Arends, R. I., & Rockwood, K. D. (2008). Student learning in a professional development school and a control school. *The Professional Educator, 32*(1).

Cave, A., & Brown, C. W. (2010). When learning is at stake: Exploration of the role of teacher training and professional development schools on elementary students' math achievement. *National Forum of Teacher Education Journal, 20*(3), 1–21.

Cook, L., & Friend, M. (1995). Co-teaching: Guidelines for creating effective practices. *Focus on Exceptional Children, 28*(3), 1–16. http://doi.org/10.1007/s13398-014-0173-7.2

Duquette, C., & Cook, S. A. (1999). Professional development schools: Preservice candidates' learning and sources of knowledge. *The Alberta Journal of Educational Research, XLV*(2), 198–207.

Fisher, D., Frey, N., & Farnan, N. (2004). Student teachers matter: The impact of student teachers on elementary-aged children in a professional development school. *Teacher Education Quarterly, 31*(2), 43–56.

Goodlad, J. I., Mantle-Bromley, C., & Goodlad, S. J. (2004). *Education for everyone: Agenda for educaton in a democracy.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Haverback, H. R., & Parault, S. J. (2008). Pre-service reading teacher efficacy and tutoring: A review. *Educational Psychology Review, 20*(3), 237–255.

Haverback, H. R., & Parault, S. J. (2011). High efficacy and the preservice reading teacher: A comparative study. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 27*(4), 703–711. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2010.12.001

Heinemann. (2015). *Leveled literacy intervention: Overview.* Retrieved December 30, 2015, from http://www.heinemann.com/fountasandpinnell/lli_Overview.aspx

Helfrich, S. R., & Bean, R. M. (2011). What matters: Preparing teachers of reading. *Reading Horizons, 50*(4), 241–262.

Howey, K. R., & Zimpher, N. L. (2006). *Boundary spanners.* Washington DC: American Association of State Colleges and Universities.

Jarrett, C., Evans, C., Dai, Y., Williams, D., & Savage, K. (2010). Effect of specialized in-service professional development activities on elementary school students' reading achievement. *National Forum of Teacher Education Journal, 20*(3), 1–13.

Leithwood, K. A. (1992). The move toward transformational leadership. *Educational Leadership, 49* (5), 8-12.

Levine, M. (2010). *Developing principles for clinically based teacher education.* Prepared for the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE).

Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

NCATE Blue Ribbon Panel. (2010). *Transforming teacher education through clinical practice: A national strategy to prepare effective teachers. Clinical teacher.* Washington, DC.

Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research & evaluation methods* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Peters, B. (2011). Intern intervention initiative: A partnership success for all. *PDS Partners, 7* (2), 2–3.

Saldaña, J. (2009). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc. http://doi.org/10.1109/TEST.2002.1041893

Shroyer, G., Yahnke, S., Bennett, A., & Dunn, C. (2007). Simultaneous renewal through Professional Development School partnerships. *The Journal of Educational Research, 100*(4), 211-225.

Stanulis, R. N. (1995). Classroom teachers as mentors: Possibilities for participation in a professional development school context. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 11*(4), 331–344. http://doi.org/10.1016/0742-051X(94)00035-5

Teitel, L. (2003). *The professional development schools handbook: Starting, sustaining, and partnerships that improve student learning.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Tomlinson, C. A. (2017). What is differentiated instruction? Retrieved January 3, 2017, from http://www.readingrockets.org/article/what-differentiated-instruction

Yin, R. K. (2009). *Case study research: Design and methods. Essential guide to qualitative methods in organizational research* (Vol. 5). http://doi.org/10.1097/FCH.0b013e31822dda9e

❖ ❖ ❖

Christopher Kennedy is an associate professor of instruction in the teacher education department of The Gladys W. and David H. Patton College of Education at OHIO University. He teaches literacy education courses and currently serves as a faculty coordinator for the graduate teaching fellows program. He is formerly the faculty coordinator of the Morrison-Gordon Early Childhood PDS.