What Makes School-University Partnerships Effective? An Investigation into the Relationship between a Teacher Training School and a University in England

Joanne Clifford-Swan, Department of Social Work, Education and Community Well-being, Northumbria University, UK

Karen Hudson, Department of Social Work, Education and Community Well-being, Northumbria University, UK

David Littlefair, Department of Social Work, Education and Community Well-being, Northumbria University, UK

ABSTRACT: The English pre-service teacher education system has changed substantially over the past 20 years. There has been a significant shift towards pre-service teachers having their training fully or partially managed and delivered by schools themselves, without the need for university input. However, despite this, the majority of such teacher training schools seek partnership with universities for academic accreditation alongside the professional programme for which they are responsible. This paper summarizes a study exploring the relationship between a teacher training school and a university. A conceptual framework of partnership in learning and teaching was used in the analysis of interview data from both school and university staff. As a result of this study, the authors present a new framework reflecting dynamic and connected features of such relationships. In doing so, the authors identify the significance of institutional, inter-relational and enhanced trust within the partnership.

NAPDS 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;

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;

The concept of the formal 'professional development school' is not a familiar one in England. Until government reforms at the beginning of this century, partnerships between most schools and universities had extended little beyond the necessary function of pre-service practicum placement provision. Nevertheless, it can be argued that, over the past 15 years, there has been a growing move from central government to enfranchise schools as system leaders, taking on many of the roles that had previously been the responsibility of local government. This is particularly true in the sphere of continued professional development and support for schools deemed to be struggling. In addition, since 2010, this central government drive towards an expanded schools' led system has specifically included the professional development of pre-service teachers which had previously, in the main, been led by universities (Jackson & Burch, 2016).

Schools have been able to take full responsibility for training pre-service teachers by becoming a government-accredited School Centered Initial Teacher Training provider (SCITT), thus gaining equal status to a university as a pre-service teacher educator. This policy has resulted in the substantial growth of school led pre-service teacher training providers (Department for Education [DfE], 2010). In 2009, English universities trained almost 79% of pre-service teachers, with the remaining 21% undertaking school led routes (Whitty, 2014). By 2016, this had shifted to a 39% / 61% split between training places the government allocated to universities and schools respectively (DfE, 2016). This paper focusses on this shift in pre-

service teacher training and the subsequent university and school relationship changes brought about as a result.

In addition to the purely professional award of Qualified Teacher Status, a requirement for those who seek to teach in English schools, many of these 'SCITT' schools have sought to provide their pre-service teachers a Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE), an internationally recognized academic award that only universities can bestow. This has resulted in schools building on their existing links or, in the case of this study, forging new partnerships with universities. Many schools consider that "academic learning in ITE (initial teacher education) remains important and that the PGCE qualification gives prestige" (Greany & Brown, 2015, p. 25).

In this way, English universities have continued to make themselves relevant in the modern pre-service teacher education landscape by working in partnership with schools in the delivery of school centric models. However, in a highly competitive market, these partnerships are often 'hard won' and can sometimes be seen as more clinical business agreements between organisations (Pavlin, 2016). Issues around value for money can lead schools to make financial judgements about which university to partner with, alongside "a much more intangible assessment of the quality and partnership considerations" (Greany & Brown, 2015, p. 31).

Previous research on partnerships between schools and universities has demonstrated that those operating at the highest level of partnership are often those with a combined focus on initial teacher education and continuing professional development as well as an openness to collaborative research (Greany & Brown, 2015; Littlefair et al., 2019). Partnerships which are built upon highly specific purposes, appear to be more robust and impactful (Bryk et al., 2011; Menter et al., 2011; Stevens, 1999). Mullinix (2002, p. 80) categorises level of the developing relationship on a continuum of 'pre-partnership', 'partnership' and 'Partnership', with the latter "developing and implementing programs together".

Mullinix (2002) also identifies nine dimensions of educational partnership; focus, activities, time, benefit, trust, organisational structures and strategies, locus of influence and contractual agreements. Healey et al.'s (2014) conceptual framework identifies key values needed to underpin working and learning partnerships, namely authenticity, inclusivity, reciprocity, empowerment, trust, challenge, community, and responsibility. Some of these themes echo Mullinix's (2002) dimensions, specifically those of focus, benefit, trust, and respect. The notion of community and empowerment, in terms of equality of participation are also important factors in sustaining partnerships, along with shared goals and aspirations (Billett et al., 2007; Dhillon, 2005; Tett, 2003). Like Poole (1995), Dhillon (2013, p. 25) recognizes responsibility and inclusivity in "committed people with shared values" underpinning the collegial nature of strong partnerships, helping to maintain focus on their core mission and thus motivation and momentum.

Extensive research mapping of educational partnerships in teacher education, identify three themes, namely "the organisation and management of partnerships, relationships and collaboration within partnerships and the challenges and mechanism of successful partnerships" (Lillejord & Børte, 2016, p. 556). Resonating with the theme of relationships and collaboration and building upon their previous work, which identified the significant role that relationships played within partnerships (Littlefair et al., 2019), the authors of this study sought to further investigate the developing professional relationships within a partnership as a means to more fully understand the complexities within partnership.

The nature of relationships within and between participants in the partnership is fundamental to the strength and ultimate success of a partnership, though there is often a delicate balance between individual and institutional relationships (Dhillon, 2013; Littlefair et al., 2019; Oakley & Selwood, 2010). There can be a disconnect in school-university relationships (Nickens et al., 2018; Myers & Price, 2010), or a lack of appreciation of the value of each partner (Greany & Brown, 2015). However, when partnerships are successful, individuals act in a boundary spanning capacity (Aldrich & Herker, 1977; Burns & Baker, 2018; Zeichner, 2010; Williams, 2013), ensuring that the partnership runs smoothly.

In the case of the university lead person, they work to overcome obstacles often caused by the university's own mechanisms and policies. Over and above a purely functional and often supervisory role, boundary spanners also foster kinship and collegiality between all partnership participants (Burns & Baker, 2018; Littlefair et al., 2019). These key enablers proactively build positive professional relationships (Burns & Baker, 2018; Greany & Brown, 2015; Mullinix, 2002; Myers & Price, 2010), through making use of softer skills. While "the extra energy that is expended (in the name of PDS) is often invisible to those not involved in such endeavors" (Myers & Price, 2010, p. 90), Greany and Brown (2015) note that the university boundary spanners become the lens through which schools judged their partner's quality and credibility.

Context

This current study focuses upon the deeper relationship between the university and a single school partner. It explores themes of shared commitment and school-university culture found within in the relationship between colleagues at the university and those based in school. The study identifies the features of the relationship that enabled it to create a more effective and bespoke learning program than each partner, on its own, could have achieved (Mullinix, 2002).

A retrospective approach was implemented focussing upon this partnership, known here by the pseudo names Beaconsfield University and White Rose School. This study spanned the school's inception as an accredited pre-service teacher training provider to the end of the first semester of the second year of

operation. The study focusses on White Rose School as it marked the establishment of a relationship with a university with whom it had not previously worked and therefore had potential to provide a clearer understanding of the key themes in the formation of the partnership.

At the time of the establishment of the partnership, White Rose School was already part of formed a well-established and successful alliance of schools. All schools within this group had been involved in university led pre-service teacher education for many years. However, as a group, they wanted a more central role in the development and retention of good teachers and believed that, by training their own, they would improve the quality and supply of new teachers in their locality. This led them to seek national government accreditation and become an independent pre-service teacher education provider in their own right. Subsequently, White Rose School took the strategic decision to involve a university partner as they felt the award of a PGCE would attract higher calibre applicants and ensure academic rigour within the programme. Beaconsfield University had many years' experience of working in such partnerships and, at the time of this study, worked in collaborative ventures with four other SCITT schools.

Like Mullinix (2002), this study attempts to explore the evolution of a partnership. Dhillon's (2013) checklist also provided the authors with valuable insight into the nature of successful partnerships. This study seeks to analyse the development of relationships and sees the emerging characteristics not as static aspects of a partnership but more as indicators of the stage the partnership is at along its journey of development. Healey et al's (2014) framework is rooted in the values rather than functions of partnership, albeit reflecting partnerships once established, rather than in evolution. While Mullinix's (2002) and Dhillon's (2013) models shared many similar features, Healey et al.'s (2014) framework had resonance with the authors of this paper for its focus on values within a partnership, "*learning* in partnership as well as working in partnership" (p. 15), its context relevant conceptualisation of the partnership, as well as a closer affinity with the language used to describe it.

In creating and building effective partnerships, establishing a clear understanding of the nature and scope of a partnership is a crucial feature, referred to by Mullinix (2002) as the "focus of interaction" and by Healey et al. (2014) as "mapping the territory." This latter phrase seems to capture the notion of each partner existing within both a separate and shared landscape and the need to draw both formal and informal boundaries. In the context of the relationship with the White Rose School, territory mapping was established very early on the in the process during pre-contractual discussions and meetings. It is clear that "the territory" was, in the first instance, identified by personnel within White Rose School themselves. They based this upon their perceptions of what universities in general, and more specifically the university within this study, could offer. Although not articulated as such, this became the lens through which White Rose School made decisions about their choice of university partner.

During these initial meetings, White Rose had shared its vision, specific contextualised priorities as well as its rationale for engagement with a university partner. It initially saw the role of the university as a mechanism to support the academic teaching, learning and assessment of its students to enable them to achieve academic scholarship. The university, however, saw the opportunity to develop a more robust and meaningful learning partnership and sought to include bespoke curriculum design within the "territory". This differed substantially from what White Rose felt was on offer from some other HE institutions it had approached. Thus, the territory mapping became an explicit part of early discussions and decision-making.

Though there is some overlap in territory mapping the relationships explored in Healey et al.'s (2014) work, the nature of the territory in the school/university relationship covered the following key areas:

- The teaching, learning and assessment of pre-service teachers
- Bespoke curriculum design as a pedagogic model to support professional attributes and behaviours
- Academic scholarship

These shared principles became the foundations upon which the partnership was established and agreed, and upon which the programme was co-written.

Participants

In line with ethical conventions, pseudonyms protect the identity of the staff involved from both the school and university. Angela, the business manager at White Rose School, was closely involved in the initial accreditation, the partnership arrangement with the university and the financial aspects of the endeavour. Veronica was the pre-service teacher programme leader of White Rose School, running the operational side of the programme including recruitment and selection, programme planning and quality assurance. Paul and Susan were qualified teachers from within the alliance of schools and undertook the role of module leaders and members of the teaching team. In Year 1 of operation, they shadowed university staff delivering the programme and marked the assignments. From Year 2, they took over the teaching in full.

From Beaconsfield University Jane, the Partnership Manager, also taught on the programme during the first year. Steve, who had been involved in the initial financial discussions in his then role of business and engagement lead for the university's education department, was also involved with the teaching on the programme.

Methodology

The study adopted a case study methodology using a qualitative, constructivist approach. The case study concept can illuminate a

general principle using a specific instance (Cohen et al., 2007; Nisbet & Watt, 1984), which reflected the nature of this study. Semi-structured interviews were used to collect data from key staff at the White Rose School and those from Beaconsfield University to explore the nature of the partnership. Cohen et al. (2007) identify semi-structured interviews as a useful mechanism to support analysis of intricate, complex and deep issues studied. Questions allowed participants to describe their personal journey as well as that of the school as an accredited training entity from its inception onwards in a chronological timeframe. All participant interviews contained the same questions. However, there was an opportunity to explore particular responses in greater depth and to allow participants to contribute information that they felt the questions had not captured.

The values identified within Healey et al.'s (2014) framework were used as the basis for the thematic analysis of the interview transcripts gathered form the participants. Interview data was therefore analysed and coded in terms of evidence of authenticity, inclusivity, reciprocity, empowerment, trust, challenge, community and responsibility.

Results

Working within the now well-established boundaries of the territory, interviewers were able to extrapolate the emerging themes from the responses.

Authenticity

The notion of authenticity seems to have been cemented early in the process, as part of the territory mapping exercise referred to earlier. For example, Angela and Veronica both referred to the authenticity of the university, from not only its academic perspective, but also its current external quality assurance rating by the English education inspectorate, The Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted). This was important as it mirrored the institution's own role as a provider of high-quality pre-service teacher education. Angela and Veronica both identified these as being key to the establishment of the partnership, one being the perceived value of an academic award from the institution concerned, the other relating to the notion of expertise within the discipline. This authenticity critically underpins the territory of the partnership, summarised in Angela's statement that, "Beaconsfield's Ofsted rating and academic credentials were fundamental to us." Susan echoed this adding, "the school chose Beaconsfield because of its reputation."

From the university perspective, Jane and Steve also viewed partnership with White Rose School as authentic and in line with their belief system, based on the "moral obligation" to meet both the professional and academic needs of their students. Jane had experience of working with a number of similar school partners and viewed such practice as "a good model for teacher training."

Reciprocity

The responses also identify a degree of reciprocity across the partnership; in fact, the very emergence of the partnership developed upon an expectation of reciprocity. Slightly divergent to Dhillon's (2005) shared goals for partnerships, in this study reciprocity brought both shared and different benefits to each partner. Ultimately, all partnerships exist to generate benefit to each stakeholder (Lambert & Knemeyer, 2004; Máirín et al., 2017). For the university, the reciprocity was clear from the outset, as a partner geographically distant from campus provided an opportunity to expand its provision and influence. Steve summed this view up in a comment that "the reputation of the education department is linked to partnership" and it leads to "greater impact and benefit for students and pupils."

As far as the school was concerned, the initial gain was in terms of academic scholarship for their students. This was an important concept to Paul who, though highly experienced both professionally and academically, felt that having the university on board provided reassurance that they would get this aspect "right" from the start. Likewise, Veronica and Susan also identified scholarship as a key aspect of the partnership. Veronica perceived the "PGCE aspects would enhance the employability of the students." Susan reflected upon the unexpected impact that the students' academic scholarship had, and was continuing to have, upon their own classroom practice. Engaging with students' assignments, as well as their required reading had made Susan critically reflect upon their own practices and felt this had re-ignited a personal desire to pursue academic scholarship. Susan felt their own ability as a teacher had improved due to practice "being influenced" by the program, the assignments and ideas raised by the students. Paul felt both the university and schools had "learned from each other." The university had learned much about marrying academic standards to a bespoke program for new partners and the school had learned the positive impact of high levels of reflection which academic scholarship brings for both new teachers entering the profession and the school staff themselves.

Inclusivity

The concept of inclusivity also featured in a number of interviews. Healey et al. (2014, p. 16) state that "partnership embraces the different talents, perspectives and experiences that all parties bring." Veronica recognized that their vision for the school had required talents outside their expertise, commenting that they "couldn't imagine us achieving what we have without the input from the university." Steve felt that the university's skill set "complemented that of the schools so the partnership benefitted from both sides being present." Susan reported having "never felt we are being told what to do, we are being advised and helped." Jane and Angela both referred to the importance of the initial meetings, which followed White Rose's decision to work with Beaconsfield, and the establishment of a shared vision and incorporation of the school's own priorities as

the basis for the partnership's inclusivity. As Jane commented, "our [Beaconsfield's] skills complemented those of the schools." These meetings saw the establishment of closer professional relationships between the key personnel from both partners, through which increased confidence in each other developed. Emerging from this was the recognition that the desired outcomes of the partnership could not be achieved by a single stakeholder (Oakley & Selwood, 2010).

Responsibility

Within the partnership, there emerged a sense of both collective responsibility and the growing responsibilities of the individuals within it, as reflected in Healey et al.'s (2014) definition. As the relationship developed, Angela and Jane held the main pillars of responsibility, each being the key representative from their respective organisations. Colleagues viewed Angela as "the key person" in terms of individual responsibility for managing the school's training role. However, Angela identified that responsibility had developed over time; they "didn't see a lot of responsibility initially in writing the SCITT bid [to the National College for Teaching and Leadership for accreditation as a teacher training provider]." Nevertheless, Angela saw the input from the university, in particular the contribution from Jane, as helping to "understand the responsibility and develop capacity."

All school staff interviewed mentioned the importance of the university; its flexibility, the quality and support it brings to the partnership and, centrally, the approach of university staff. Susan had a desire to build upon initial relations "to make the partnership even better." Jane saw involvement with the school as an opportunity to "bring our own wealth of experience of teaching and training standards" to a new provider to ensure "everyone has an understanding of expectations." As the partnership worked on the development of the programme, the areas of responsibility in terms of logistics and processes were established, along with a shared sense of a moral responsibility for high quality pre-service teacher training and education.

Community

During the period that the partnerships evolve, an emerging notion of community and a sense of belonging develop, not evident at the very start of the process, the development of relationships and growing understanding of responsibilities created a professional community. Co-facilitated education can create a sense of community between universities and schools (Sweetman et al., 2018). Its nature became more apparent at the point of the first cohort of students enrolling and the subsequent need to deliver high quality teaching jointly. As Steve noted, "everyone plays their part." The university teaching team stepped back from delivery in Year 2. As Susan explained they "felt that was right." All of the school partners (Angela, Veronica, Paul, and Susan) said at some point in their interviews that "they missed [the university personnel] coming down regularly." In referring to the development of relationships

and the sense of a community, Veronica acknowledged the importance of choosing the "right partner," which matched Steve's view that "personalities need to be suited to partnership" and "people involved need to know how to work in partnership." Angela had very positive views of the role of the university and actually stated that they "admired everything the university partners do."

Empowerment

Empowerment is concerned with the appropriate distribution of power (Healey et al., 2014; Lambert & Knemeyer, 2004; Mullinix, 2002). Reflections from the interview data revealed there was a complex interplay of different levels of power between Beaconsfield University and the White Rose School as their relationship developed. In the first instance, school leaders had the power to choose with which university to partner. Once established, the university, by virtue of their academic expertise was in a position of power as the capacity builder and worked towards a model "where power is distributed appropriately" (Healey et al., 2014, p. 16).

Respondents suggest that the distribution of power within the partnership facilitated high levels of empowerment as the partnership evolved. Angela felt strongly that the university input, particularly in the year preceding the first cohort of students and during the first year of operation, had been crucial for their development and the creation of empowerment on their side. Angela indicated that, "you [the university] brought us on this journey, we are here today because of our relationship with you" and also that "you build capacity in us, we are in this place because you supported us so much last year." Veronica, as programme leader, felt the university staff had "given me more confidence." Paul "felt more in control in the second year" and "was clearer about my role." Following their shadowing of the university teaching team in Year 1, Paul was confident in delivery at 'Level 7' in Year 2, to the extent that they adapted some of the university materials. Jane summed up the development of the academic programme in terms of a philosophy of "doing with partners rather than doing to partners." Empowerment was a clear aim as far as the university was concerned, but something that had to be explicitly developed over time rather than being present from the start.

Challenge

The nature of challenge sees that "all parties take time to get to know each other" (Healey et al., 2014, p. 17) to undertake mutual challenge. In this context, challenge is robust engagement between partners, framed by honesty and openness (Dhillon, 2013; Mullinix, 2002; Myers & Price, 2010). In this study, as honesty developed, so mutual challenge was nurtured as a result. Angela acknowledged that "as time went on and the partnership became more established, I felt I could approach the university with different things." This was also reflected by Jane

who noted, "the more the school engaged with us the more they asked for a few more things."

A number of respondents referred to rising to challenges present within the developing partnership, Angela openly spoke of the process of validating the academic award at the university as "an incredibly wieldy and challenging process." Jane was very conscious that "the validation process was quite alienating for the school team. It placed a number of significant demands on them and they didn't initially understand the reason for these." Angela felt supported to "understand the process" and their contribution to it. From the university perspective, Steve pointed out that in a good relationship like this one, "challenge is more likely to be embraced and that means we are all learning from each other." Steve welcomed the opportunity to talk openly with Paul about ideas and hear the rationale for the adaptations made to the teaching materials. Steve saw the partnership as one of equals where everyone feels valued and thus on that basis "you can challenge."

Jane, who managed the pre-service teacher education external quality assurance activity at the Beaconsfield University, saw an essential part of the role as challenging on quality assurance issues, whilst recognising that this notion of challenge was a sequential one and came only after the establishment of trust and a clear understanding of responsibilities. Angela and Veronica welcomed this approach to challenge and saw it as an opportunity to articulate their thinking (Lickley, 2019). They both spoke of their sense of wanting things "to be right" and saw this as a means to deepen the partnership and ensure that it continued to evolve.

Trust

Following synthesis of the thematic analysis, it was evident that respondents made multiple references to the notion of trust. Perhaps not surprisingly as "social aspects of partnership working, such as networks based on shared values and trust, emerge as the glue that holds people together and thus sustains a partnership," (Dhillon, 2005, p. 215). This is exemplified in Susan's comment that "we can feel we can ask the university anything" and that "we are fully supported by the university." Veronica had a strong sense of trust in the responsiveness of the university team, stating that the university helped with questions and resource suggestions, responded quickly to their requests and this gave them confidence. Paul found the university staff to be "very personable" and felt they "didn't need to hide anything from the university partners."

Angela also mentioned the word 'trust' on numerous occasions. When deciding which university to partner with for the development of the school's pre-service provision, Angela commented that "Beaconsfield University would trust us, so we picked them rather than another institution." Angela noted that this had developed into a trust between professional individuals, and not just between two organisations, noting "the university partners trust us, the relationship is open and honest, and we feel supported." Angela also referred to the current "support

and trust between us" and the fact that "we are here today because of the relationship", providing a sense of the development of trust over the course of the partnership, and as an important dimension to sustain it (Dhillon, 2013; Mullinix, 2002; Myers & Price, 2010).

From the university perspective, Jane stated, "we trust them to deliver, there is trust" and that "we trust them to contribute to evaluation using evidence". Jane also talked about the "honest relationship" within which they were "happy to raise concerns otherwise it is not a proper partnership". Steve reported, "we learn from each other" but then went on to say that there was "mutual trust between all partners to do their role, we don't worry they won't fulfil their part and they don't worry that we won't".

Discussion

Upon analysis using Healey et al.'s (2014) conceptual framework, aspects of all eight values were present within the participants' narratives. Within the framework, however, the interrelationship between or the relative strength of each of the eight values is not explicitly explored. In this instance, it became clear that "trust" was a more dominant value within the White Rose School and Beaconsfield University partnership. The authors' initial view was that the other values seemed to be, to some degree, dependent on the existence of trust. If "trust" were not well established, the other values would struggle to flourish. It appears to the authors that trust is the gatekeeper for all key values of partnership work, and, without trust, the others would struggle to occur as successfully.

Although trust appears to be the underpinning and driving value for the success of the Beaconsfield University and White Rose School partnership, the authors argue that trust itself is not a single defined concept, rather it based upon different foundations at different stages. Like Dhillon (2013) and Mullinix (2002), the study shows a chronology of trust, with evidence of trust emerging in the initial stages, developing through professional relationships, and embedding itself as part of a more established and empowered partnership. However, analysis also suggests that the nature of trust itself changed as the partnership developed. Both Mullinix (2002) and Dhillon (2013) also recognise different types of trust developing as a partnership deepens. Mullinix (2002) refers to trust on a continuum from "building trust and earning respect" in the pre-partnership phase to "mutual trust and respect throughout partner organizations" in a more fully developed partnership (p. 83). Mirrored in this study, trust was initially based upon the university's reputation as an organisation, before becoming more dependent upon the professional relationships between the key personnel involved in the partnership. Here, the terms "institutional" and "inter-relational" trust capture the nuances from this study, within the concept of trust overall. Institutional trust at the beginning of the partnership featured a higher degree of authenticity and reciprocity than most of the other values. For example, the school initiated their partnership with Beaconsfield University

due to their reputation including Ofsted rating, perceived expertise in the discipline, and flexibility of approach, as suggested during initial meetings. Reciprocally, the university was able to draw on its previous experience with other schools' pre-service provision and saw this as an opportunity to expand its engagement within the field.

Inter-relational trust, however, grew over time as partners built up a professional relationship around programme design, navigation through university processes and school staff development. Reflecting on the Healey et al.'s (2014) framework, this inter-relational trust encompasses the development of a community, the promotion of inclusivity and the implementation of responsibility. Interviewees also indicated that firmly embedded trust was, by the end of the first term of the second cohort of students, reflected through empowerment and on-going mutual challenge.

The important part that inter-relational trust plays supports the findings of a previous study (Littlefair et al., 2019), looking at the key enablers in partnerships, which identified the link person as the crucial interface. This study argues that the inter-relational trust established early on between the link personnel at the two partner organisations became the main driver of the deepening of the partnership. The effectiveness and inter-connectivity between each partner's identified boundary spanning stakeholder seems fundamental to the embedding of trust within the process. By sequentially building different types of "trust," all the other key values of the Healey et al.'s (2014) partnership framework appear to follow and the foundations for a strong and enduring partnership develop. This current study sees the inter-relational roles depending upon pre-established institutional trust, subsequently moving into a sphere of embedded and empowered partnership, within which the implicitly understood territory and the nature of the partnership can embrace a depth of challenge.

Conclusion

While the Healey et al.'s (2014) framework was invaluable in providing a lens through which to critique the partnership, our process suggests that relationships between external partners and universities within an educational context can be analysed through a revised framework which captures not only the features of the partnership but also the evolutionary stages of trust within it (Fig 1). The framework indicates that, for the partnership relationship to become enhanced, trust needs to have moved from an emerging to developing status and finally become embedded within the interactions that form the partnership.

Expanding upon the notion of developmental trust over a period of time (Dhillon, 2013; Mullinix, 2002; Oakley & Selwood, 2010), this study also identifies significant importance of institutional trust in its very early stages. This study argues that it is only at the final stage that the enhanced level of trust can facilitate both mutual challenge and greater levels of mutual empowerment. Trust is the main driver to secure enhanced
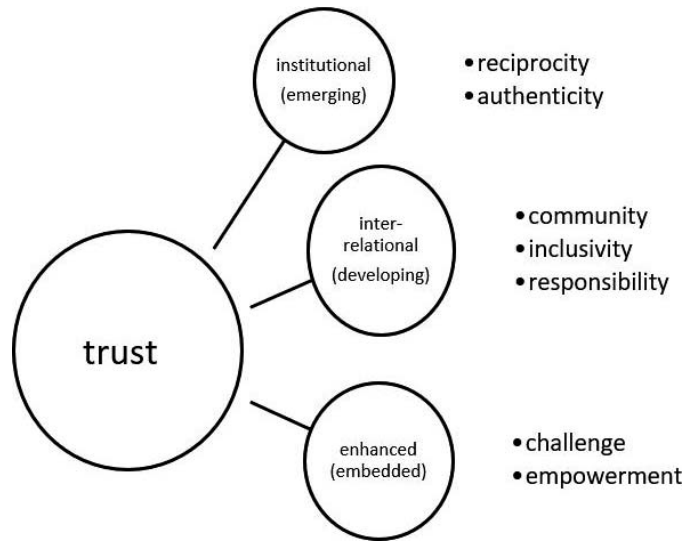

Figure 1.   The chronology and features of trust within the partnership

partnership working, rather than a dimension which occurs naturally as result of the partnership working. As a result, its role in ensuring that a partnership works effectively to achieve its shared goals needs to be explicitly acknowledged. Partnerships should look to explicitly establish and promote institutional trust between the individuals representing different organisations.

The development of strategic school-university partnerships is an expanding aspect of the pre-service teacher education landscape in England. Partnerships are more likely to be sustained if aspects of social capital, such as respect, trust and shared values are promoted (Dhillon, 2009; Peel et al., 2002). This study confirms these assertions, but also suggests a more strategic and explicit approach to partnership development for both schools and universities, through shedding light on the underpinning features, values and phases of partnership and changes in how trust operates at these stages. Understanding the evolving nature of trust, as well as the aspects which are dependent on it to flourish, help to gain a more detailed understanding, not just of the process of establishing an effective partnership but also, and perhaps more crucially, the way that successful partnerships establish themselves incrementally and the role that individuals play in that development.

Understanding trust as an explicit feature which requires promotion and nurturing from the start will help leaders of partnerships to ensure collaborative activities build trust, and that time devoted to trust development promotes a sense of community, inclusivity, and shared responsibility, and ultimately achieves challenge and empowerment of all partners (Fig.1). The new trust-based framework will be useful in guiding the process of ensuring new partnerships are successful, as well as a mechanism through which struggling partnerships can be more effectively evaluated. It will also help inform school and university leaders in their identification of the most appropriate individuals to boundary spanning roles. While both schools and universities can gain much from such relationships, the ultimate

beneficiaries to such partnerships are the new teachers themselves, their pupils, and the wider community they will go on to serve. SUP

References

Aldrich, H., & Herker, D. (1977). Boundary spanning roles and organization structure. *Academy of Management Review, 2*(2), 217–30.

Billett, S., Ovens, C., Clemans, A., & Seddon, T. (2007). Collaborative working and contested practices: forming, developing and sustaining social partnerships in education. *Journal of Education Policy.* 22(6), 637-656.

Bryk A. S., Gomez L. M., & Grunow A. (2011). Getting ideas into action: Building networked improvement communities in education. In M. Hallinan (Ed), *Frontiers in Sociology of Education* (pp 127-162). Springer.

Burns, W. R., & Baker, W. (2016). The boundary spanner in Professional Development Schools: In search of common nomenclature. *School-University Partnerships, 9*(2), 28-39.

Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2007). *Research methods in education* (6th ed.). Routledge.

DfE (Department for Education). (2010). *The importance of teaching*. The Stationery Office

DfE (Department for Education). (2016). *ITT recruitment information*. https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/467847/ITT-recruitment-information-for-academic-year-2016-to-2017-v1.xlsx

Dhillon, J. K. (2005). The rhetoric and reality of partnership working. *Journal of Further and Higher* Education, 29(3), 211-219.

Dhillon, J. K. (2009). The role of social capital in sustaining partnership. *British Educational Research Journal, 35*(5), 687-704.

Dhillon, J. K. (2013). Senior managers' perspectives of leading and managing effective, sustainable and successful partnerships. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership, 41*(6), 736-750.

Greany, T., & Brown, C. (2015) Partnerships between teaching schools and universities: Research report. *London Centre for Leadership in Learning UCL Institute of Education.*

Healey, M., Flint, A., & Harrington, K. (2014). Engagement through partnership: Students as partners in learning and teaching in higher education. *Higher Education Academy.*

Jackson, A., & Burch, J. (2016). School Direct, a policy for initial teacher training in England: Plotting a principled pedagogical path through a changing landscape. *Professional Development in Education, 42*(4), 511-526. https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/19415257.2015.1052090

Lambert, D. M., & Knemeyer, A. M. (2004). We're in this together. *Harvard Business Review, 82*(12), 114-122.

Lickley, V. (2019). Why don't people want to train to teach? *National Association of School Based Teacher Trainers*, available at https://www.nasbtt.org.uk/why-dont-people-want-to-train-to-teach/

Lillejord, S., & Børte, K. (2016). Partnership in teacher education – a research mapping. *European Journal of Teacher Education,* 39(5), 550-563. https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/02619768.2016.1252911?journalCode=cete20

Littlefair, D., Clifford Swan, J., & Hudson, K. (2019). Kinship and collegiality: An exploration of the underpinning characteristics of external partnerships at a university education pepartment. *Qualitative Research Journal,* 19(4), 371-379.

Máirín, G., Roche, M., & Sullivan, B. (2017). *Learning communities in educational partnerships*. Bloomsbury. https://www.bloomsbury.com/uk/learning-communities-in-educational-partnerships-9781474243599/

Menter, M., Hulme, M., Elliot D., & Lewin, J. (2010). *Literature review on teacher education in the 21st Century*. Scottish Government Social Research. https://www.gov.scot/publications/literature-review-teacher-education-21st-century/

Mullinix, B. B. (2002). Nurturing partnership: A Southern African continuum of flexible stages in partnership development. *Current Issues in Comparative Education, 3*(2), 77-88.

Myers, S. D., & Price, M. A. (2010). Expanding university faculty's vision of a PDS: So this is what partnership really means? *School-University Partnerships, 4*(2), 81-91.

Nickens, N., Loman, K., McCoy, A., Tye, N., Danley, A., & DeVilbiss, M. (2018). Matched for success: Strategic student teaching placements. *School-University Partnerships*, 11(4), 5-15.

Nisbet, J., & Watt, J. (1984). Case study. In J. Bell, T. Bush, A. Fox, J. Goodey, & S. Goulding (Eds), *Conducting small scale investigations in educational management* (pp. 79-92). Harper and Row.

Oakley, K., & Selwood, S. (2010). Conversations and collaborations: The leadership of collaborative projects between higher education and the arts and cultural sector. *Leadership Foundation for Higher Education.*

Pavlin, S. (2016). Considering university-business cooperation modes from the perspective of enterprises. *European Journal of Education, 51*(1), 25-39. https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/ejed.12163

Peel, H., A., Peel, B., B., & Baker, M., E. (2002). School-university partnerships: A viable model. *International Journal of Educational Management, 16*(7), 319-325. https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/09513540210448077/full/html

Poole, D. L. (1995). Partnerships buffer and strengthen. *Health and Social Work* 20(1), 2-5.

Stevens, D. (1999). The ideal, real and surreal in school-university partnerships:

Reflections of a boundary spanner. *Teaching and Teacher Education,* 15(3), 287-299.

Sweetman, S., Shea, K., & Silversmith, J. (2018) Collaboration between formal and informal networks: Partnering educators for place-based learning experiences. *School-University Partnerships,* 11(4), 104-122.

Tett, L. (2003) Working in partnership. *NIACE lifelines in adult learning (9).* NIACE.

Whitty, G., (2014). Recent developments in teacher training and their consequences for the 'University Project' in education. *Oxford Review of Education,* 40(4), 466-481. https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/03054985.2014.933007

Williams, J. (2013). Boundary crossing and working in the third space: Implications for a teacher educator's identity and practice. *Studying Teacher Education,* 9(2), 118-129. https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/17425964.2013.808046

Zeichner, K. (2010). Rethinking the connections between campus courses and field experiences in college and university-based teacher education. *The Journal of Teacher Education,* 61(1-2), 79-99.

❖ ❖ ❖

Joanne Clifford Swan is a former Head of Subject for Education at Northumbria University, UK. She is currently leading on the development of collaborative projects with schools and partner organisations, with a specific focus on early career teacher development and primary literacy. Joanne also plays an active role in school governance.

Karen Hudson is Head of Subject for Education at Northumbria University, UK. Her responsibilities include initial teacher education, children and early years, quality assurance and partnerships. Karen's research interests include the benefits of short exchange visits, the internationalisation of the curriculum in Higher Education and the partnerships that enable these.

David Littlefair is Deputy Head of the Department of Social Work, Education and Community Wellbeing at Northumbria University, UK. Working in the field of continuing professional development for teachers for nearly two decades, David pioneered an off-site partnership model for CPD whereby the university and school jointly plan and deliver a masters' programme at the partner organisation.