# *The Faculty-in-Residence Role: A Process of Acculturation*

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**Abstract: Launching** and sustaining a Professional Development School (PDS) is nothing short of a journey into new, often uncharted, territories. There are literally new environments to explore and new relationships to build. After a year of investigating the work of university faculty assigned to five PDS sites, sociological theories of acculturation emerged as foundational to starting a new university-school relationship as well as sustaining current relationships during leadership transitions. Evidence is presented from qualitative data analysis of faculty and school personnel and will be presented for those new to PDS work and others finding themselves amid change.

***NAPDS Essentials**: Essential 8: Boundary-Spanning Roles A PDS creates space for, advocates for, and supports college/university and P–12 faculty to operate in well defined, boundary-spanning roles that transcend institutional settings.*

The importance of school-university partnerships has long been recognized as fundamental to teacher preparation programs (AACTE, 2010; Darling-Hammond, 1994, 2006, 2014; Goodlad, 1994) and has been codified in accreditation standards (CAEP, 2013, 2022; NCATE, 2010). Polly et al. (2020) explicated the relationships among Goodlad, AACTE, and the work of the National Association of Professional Development Schools (NAPDS) Nine Essentials, and concluded one of the overarching themes is Intensive Clinical Experience: "School-university partnerships should include ongoing, comprehensive, intensive clinical practice experiences that enhance experiences in courses" (p. 6).

Our work with Professional Development Schools (PDS) is grounded in Goodlad's (1994) notion of simultaneous renewal as a strategy to improve P-12 education and teacher preparation and specifically in the following postulates:

- Postulate Fifteen – Programs for the education of educators must assure for each candidate the availability of a wide array of laboratory settings for simulation, observation, hands-on experiences, and exemplary schools for internships and residencies; they must admit no more students to their programs than can be assured these quality experiences.
- Postulate Sixteen – Programs for the education of educators must engage future teachers in the problems and dilemmas arising out of the inevitable conflicts and incongruities between what is perceived to work in practice and the research and theory supporting other options (pp. 295-298).

Our partnership network consists of 53 partner schools and five professional development schools (PDSs). Each PDS has an assigned university faculty member who receives a course release to serve as the faculty-in-residence at the PDS. PDS sites engage in unique and intensive school-university collaboration through action research and inquiry projects in addition to hosting teacher candidates for field experiences and internships. Each PDS has a significant university presence with a faculty-in-residence to support teachers and administrators, teacher candidates, and students. This study examined the experiences of five faculty-in-residence as they charted unknown territory; built relationships with students, staff and teacher candidates; and worked to find their places within the P-12 school. The acculturation of faculty-in-residence to the P-12 school culture of each PDS is described in the following sections.

## Theoretical Framework

We first framed our work around the concept of boundary spanning, engaging in a third space that merges the realities and expectations of higher education and P-12 schools. Stevens (1999) defines a boundary spanner as an "intermediary who commutes literally and figuratively between the schools and the university and plays a critical role in the development of a successful partnership" (p. 287). Within the context of our Partnership Network, both university and P-12 faculty engaged in teacher preparation and professional learning to span boundaries, thus creating the *third space* where the work of both is merged (Bhabha, 1994). Third space is a hybrid space that is "socially produced through discursive and social interactions" (Martin et al., 2011, p. 300). School and university partners find themselves

navigating a space not well understood by others within workplace cultures that differ and are sometimes at odds (Brookhart & Loadman, 1990). As we spent more time in the field, spanning the boundaries between higher education and P-12 schools, working in the third space, forming relationships and learning how to work in a new environment, we began to realize we were learning to "fit in" with a new culture, learning different cultural norms, new customs, and new priorities. This situation led us to examine our role as more of a process of acculturation.

*Acculturation* is a complex process (Khawaja et al., 2018) involving the "changes in cultural practices, values, and identities, and their influence on individuals' psychological well-being and social functioning when people of different cultures interact for an extended period of time" (Ward, 2001, as cited in Vietze et al., 2020, p. 617). While frequently applied to children and youth, the theoretical underpinnings can also support investigation into adult acculturation into a new setting in which they are typically, at the onset, viewed as an outsider and therefore at risk for exclusion (Juang & Syed, 2019). In this specific case, the investigation involves university faculty members joining a P-12 public school community.

The process of acculturation applied in any context comes with excitement and challenges. The perceived support level for cultural group membership can result in positive outcomes or feelings of loneliness and frustration (Phinney et al., 2001). Perception plays a further role as orientation is partially predicted by expectations about how one should be navigating the acculturation process; when newcomers feel discriminated against, there is a higher probability of a negative acculturation trajectory (Vietze et al., 2020). Alternatively, high levels of social support, in which a group contextualizes the process and illustrates coping skills, can help mitigate the stress that accompanies the acculturation process (Khawaja et al., 2018). While the person themselves is a factor in the acculturation process, the external forces at play have a strong influence.

Pires et al. (2006) present an acculturation model that amalgamates numerous perspectives on the process. Their model resulted from research on the degree of success of migrant workers as they move from one work location to another. They emphasize the fact that their model, adapted and presented in Figure 1 as a curved graph of perceived competence across time, represents a description of the acculturation process as opposed to a full-fledged theory because it does not offer explanations as to what might cause or facilitate transition from one phase to the next. The image has proven helpful in the context of our institution as we have worked to integrate approaches to working with Multilingual Learners (MLs) across our teacher education curriculum.

The four main phases align with what we see and can to some extent predict in our P-12 MLs. The *honeymoon* phase can be one of excitement and awe, accompanied by increased feelings of competence as new aspects of American and local culture are discovered. The *culture shock* phase represents a descending feeling of competence as MLs become overwhelmed by demands of learning the language and learning academic content through that language, as well as all the challenges of "fitting in" amongst peers and the specific culture of school. This phase is also characterized by an increased realization that they miss their home cultures, and that many traditions and accompanying components (such as meals) cannot be fully replicated in the U.S. The combination of these demands and realizations culminates in a "bottoming out," when MLs reach their lowest point in terms of perceived competence.

Eventually, transition to the *adjustment* phase comes with the realization that they may never be able to return to their home cultures and traditions, and that instead they must "make the best of it" and find ways to preserve what they can, modify as necessary, and develop cultural components that can make them feel somewhat "at home" in this new environment. Finally, the *mastering* phase represents a time when MLs are working not only to preserve aspects of their own culture and find their way in the new one, but also to share aspects of their culture with newfound friends and colleagues in their current settings. In this phase, MLs become advocates for themselves and their home cultures and often begin working with other newcomers to shepherd them through the acculturation process.

In our work with teacher candidates, we emphasize that in this model (Fig. 1) the level of perceived competence does rise again during the *adjustment* phase, but even in the *mastering* phase it is never as high as that of the transition between the *honeymoon* and *culture shock* phases. Nonetheless, perceived competence is higher in the final (but never ending) stage than upon first entering the new culture. To help our undergraduates, most of whom have not lived anywhere other than their home state, understand the acculturation process, we apply the phases to their own adjustment to college life. They can relate their excitement in the first half of their first semester to the honeymoon phase, the point from mid-semester to final grades for that first semester to the culture shock phase, and their second semester and beyond as the adjustment and mastering phases, as they find their own ways to navigate the demands of college life. Similarly, we, the authors of this study, found application of the acculturation phases analogous to our experiences in navigating the cultures of our respective specific Professional Development School settings.

## Methods

This collaborative case study occurred in five Professional Development Schools (PDS) within a larger Partnership Network associated with a public university in the Southeast. In this particular state setting, there is no formal definition of PDS or school-university partnership at the state level. In this partnership network, a school applies to become a PDS, and must meet certain criteria to be eligible. The distinguishing criterion for a PDS is that 75% of eligible teachers in the school be willing to serve as hosts (for early field experiences) or mentors (for candidates at the internship level). When accepted by the network's leadership team, a PDS enters a three-year

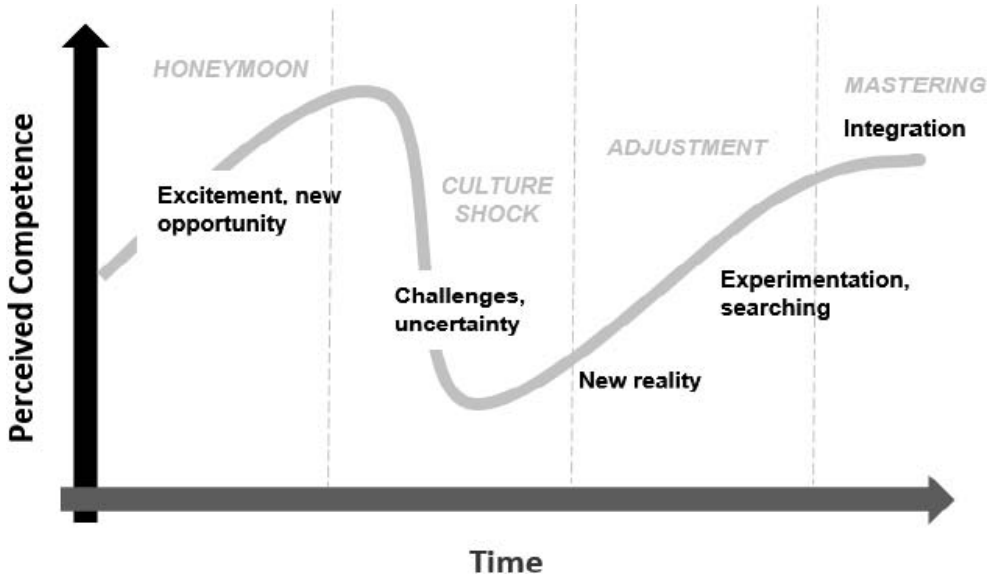


Figure 1. Adaptation U-Curve of Cross-Cultural Adjustment Process
*Note*: Adapted from Pires et al. (2006).

relationship (renewable for one additional three-year cycle) that is evaluated annually based on goals specific to that PDS.

For the PDSs in this collaborative case study, two are considered urban (both elementary), two are considered suburban (one high, one elementary), and one is considered rural (middle) (see Table 1 for the specific associations). All five of the PDSs receive Title I funds. The three elementary PDSs have significant populations of multilingual learners, but that is not true of the middle or high schools. Case studies explore the experiences and behaviors of groups, individuals, situations or events over time (Yin, 2003) and allow researchers to study "the particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances" (Stake, 1995, p. xi). In this collaborative case study, we sought to explore how faculty-in-residence (FIR), acting as boundary spanners, came to understand their roles and responsibilities within a third space through acculturation.

*Participants.* The five FIR represented diverse perspectives and experiences. Melanie, a FIR at the high school level, brought close to eight years of experience. She has served in three different school settings, elementary, middle, and high, and was in her third year at the high school during the time of the study. Like Melanie, Morgan has worked in three separate PDS sites including two middle schools and an elementary school. Morgan also had eight years of experience as a FIR and was in the third year in an elementary setting during the time of the study. Sammy, a fourth year FIR, also served at a middle school PDS site where she had been since starting. Yolanda was a second year FIR when the study began. She worked with students and staff at a new elementary level PDS. Jamie, a new FIR at the time of the study also worked in a new PDS at the elementary level. Participant characteristics are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Study Participants

| *Name (Pseudonym)* | *PDS School Level / Type* | *# of Years at Current PDS* | *Total # of Years as a Faculty-in-Residence* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Melanie | High / Suburban | 3 | 8 |
| Morgan | Elementary /Suburban | 3 | 8 |
| Sammy | Middle / Rural | 3 | 3 |
| Yolanda | Elementary / Urban | 1 | 1 |
| Jamie | Elementary / Urban | new | 0 |

The five FIR along with the university Partnership Director met twice each semester to reflect on their work and experiences at the PDS sites. Each FIR was working with either a new PDS or a new administration within an existing PDS. To capture the dynamic process of developing and sustaining PDSs, participants discussed PDS progress, activities, and struggles guided by the following questions Martin et al (2011) used in their examination of university-based teacher educators building relationships in the third space:

- What challenges do I face in the school setting as I work toward developing and navigating a collective third space in a partnership setting?
- What challenges do I face in the university setting?
- What practices do I use to work toward developing and navigating a collective third space in a partnership setting?

Meetings were recorded and then transcribed. FIR along with the director then independently read and analyzed the transcripts to establish initial codes through methods of constant comparison (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Initial codes were compared and then collapsed into several broad categories.

Table 2. Integration of Identified Themes with Acculturation Curve

| | Emerging Themes | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Acculturation Cycle | *Purpose* | *Access* | *Relationships* | *Perspective* |
| *Perceived Competence, Honeymoon* | I know the FIR role description. | I'm going to email the principal and ask for a time to meet. | Looking forward to being able to help the staff with PD needs. | Everyone seems excited about the service learning project idea. |
| *Culture Shock, Acceptance of Reality* | I'm glad to have a course release, but I'm just not sure I'm needed at the school. | I can't even get the administrative assistant to add me to the distribution list. | Not sure how to navigate the waters when teachers share concerns about administrators. | Seems like people are overwhelmed – can't get any teachers to respond to my email. |
| *Experimentation, Adjustment* | Let me find some teachers to work with on this project. | Finally worked out my teaching schedule to attend department meetings. | Found three teachers who want to work on engagement. | I used to wonder why I was doing something totally unrelated to my expertise, but realized that is what FIRs do. |
| *Integration, Mastering* | Finally I have a purpose for being here. | I know all about bus changes, lunch menu, and delayed openings - glad to be "in the know." | Invited to Leadership Team meeting to discuss PD plans for next year. | Boundary spanning. . .that is what this role is all about. |

After rereading the data, the group identified and discussed relevant examples and ideas that fell within the broader categories.

## Findings

Emerging codes included Purpose, Access, Relationships, and Perspective. These were highly evident in the data and are inextricably connected to the process of acculturation discussed as our theoretical foundation. As can be seen in the acculturation curve, the acculturation process is essentially about finding and defining one's *purpose* in a new culture, and doing so depends on gaining *access* to cultural capital, forming *relationships* with members of the new culture, and gaining *perspective* on both the home culture and the new culture (and ways in which they can be related and/or integrated). As each theme is discussed, connections to the acculturation curve are highlighted in bold text and stages of acculturation are indicated in italics. A summary is provided in Table 2.

*Purpose.* Purpose encapsulates the idea of belonging and having a clear reason to be at the school. Although purpose was necessary to begin to form relationships, we found our purpose could be dictated by the school or, if necessary, contrived by us. In several cases, the finding of purpose began by working with our teacher education candidates (as a seemingly logical connection for all involved). But, when we were invited to participate in school activities such as action research, book clubs, and even spontaneous projects, our sense of belonging dramatically increased.

As FIRs, our desire to quickly establish a purpose within our schools became an important, yet somewhat elusive goal. We felt a need to solidify our roles as members of the school community. In many ways, the drive to identify a purpose served to provide assurance that we were making a contribution to our schools and satisfying our personal efforts to "accomplish something." This quest to find a purpose aligned with the acculturation curve given that our initial feelings of **competence and excitement** (the *honeymoon* phase) turned quickly to **fear and uncertainty** (*culture shock*) when such purpose could not be easily defined. Jamie expressed this idea during one of our early debriefing meetings, "That is what scared me the most. I had no idea what I was walking into." In contrast to our roles as university faculty, we had loosely defined schedules at our schools that often shifted based on the events and activities occurring within the schools during our visits. It was not uncommon for our plans to shift based on the needs of the teachers, administrators, students, or teacher candidates present in the school. Morgan captured this *culture shock* sentiment while reflecting on the frustrations associated with not having a purpose, "I mean, I'm still at the walking around stage because nothing is consistent, nothing is expected either. And even when I try to make it so, it doesn't happen." We eventually came to embrace the opportunities that spontaneously occurred as we walked the hallways of our schools and floated in and out of classrooms. In a later debriefing, Morgan remarked on an experience that marked moving toward the ***adjustment*** phase of purpose within our schools. "I do have probably the most hope with this one kindergarten teacher. She's open, receptive, and has more English Learners this year than she's ever had. And so that's a concern for her." During this stage of acculturation, we were most hopeful about the potential of beginning new projects or ideas with teachers, staff, or students

within the school. This stage often included having purpose eventually provided, thereby helping us transition to the ***integration*** phase, as was true for Jamie.

> And that first faculty meeting...I went up to the principal who said "This is Jamie, and they are going to be in [teacher] room. Jamie will be working with our EL students." This is not my background. But just being there a couple of times and sitting with [teacher] and talking about lesson plans, I found they don't use technology at that school, at all. The teacher was talking about how some of her students needed help with speaking and writing as well. I suggested we could use *Flipgrid*, and the students can write their script and then they can speak it. And then, they can self-assess and see where they need to improve. And so, just in the space of three weeks, we're doing some really cool things. We're writing a grant to get more funding and iPads. So it did kind of pull in my area of expertise. She's got the content with English Learners and I've got this.

Although having the school dictate our purpose proved to be beneficial in setting our course as FIR, it was not always structured or planned. There were times when we were given a short term, unpredictable, or spontaneous purpose or role to fulfill. On one such occasion, Morgan supported the school in a unique capacity.

> Morgan: I had to help them with their lockdown drill. They had to practice it one time before because the room gets dark and the children get scared, you know? So I was the person.
> Melanie: You were the active shooter?
> Yolanda: Oh my gosh! This *is* a new role!
> Morgan: We didn't talk about active shooters. We talked about the administrators or resource officers. I think she said, "people in charge" would come to the door and jiggle the handle to be sure that it's locked.

In addition to providing assistance with the lockdown drill, Morgan, like all of us, frequently ended up in other situations in which the school dictated an unpredictable or spontaneous purpose. We jumped in to serve lunch or bus duties, provide academic support to struggling students, or help calm a student in crisis. When there was an unexpected absence at school, we helped out when needed. It was our willingness to adapt that facilitated a shift in our perspectives on the notion of purpose. We began to see that purpose was fluid and may not always have to be predetermined. We recognized that serving in our schools was not just about coming in to implement professional development based on our own expertise, but also **integrating** our own growth and development as FIR. It was this shift to the *integration/mastering* phase on the acculturation curve that ultimately led several of us to find solace in identifying purposes that directly aligned with existing structures within the schools. For example, Melanie established a Professional Learning Community (PLC) for the teacher candidates. The goal of the PLC was to function alongside other existing PLCs already present within the schools.

> We had two breakfasts with the interns. We were thinking that we would start to have a guest person come, like the media specialist, the counselor, some other people in the school and what their role is and how they assess- so it's not just teaching, but what else goes on in school. I think we're going to organize that for next year. Because they have PLCs at the school, so we can say "this is what our PLC is going to be," I think we can make it a little more formal.

Although finding a purpose within an existing school structure often meant that our efforts were not directly related to our own professional goals, we experienced great satisfaction in being able to provide a specific type of predetermined support. We relished having an intentional purpose. Melanie outlined this ***mastery*** of purpose as she discussed a collaborative project between the university and her school, "The thing that helps is that connection, and it's like a set program instead of, 'I'll do whatever you want me to.'" The willingness to work within existing school structures was often instrumental in helping us all solidify a purpose - be it temporary, spontaneous, within, or outside our areas of expertise.

*Access.* A precursor to developing an authentic sense of purpose, building relationships, and gaining nuanced perspective, the theme of access encompassed actual physical access to the building, being visible to teachers, developing backdoor channels from which to gather information, and time constraints related to when we could physically be present in the school building. As the work started, faculty appreciated having access to the P-12 environment, which kept them connected to the "real world" of teaching and often translated into experiences that were brought back to illustrate course concepts at the university. There was a sense of **excitement** in this *honeymoon* phase that came from entering a new community with opportunities to learn and grow.

However, lack of access often diminished that **initial elation**. Often, physical access became the first roadblock. Jamie noted, "Since this is my first year, I'm having logistical challenges. . .like not having a badge. So, the secretary had to buzz me in, and if I go out of the building with kids that are playing, I can't get back in." Lack of physical access contributed to a sense of frustration—faculty wanted the relatively basic ability to enter the building, classrooms, and office spaces without intruding or being an imposition. "The difficulty-like how you said you go into the classrooms—I struggle with that because there are no windows and I have a concern about knocking," Sammy explained. Melanie agreed, "Yeah, I don't go into classrooms because I feel the same way. I can't easily get in." Acknowledging implications of school safety and established

procedures, gaining physical access was actually a significant setback for most faculty as they harbored feelings of being an "outsider," which is a hallmark of *culture shock*. Most FIRs never reached the fully *integrative* phase in terms of access. However, small victories did help to move toward the *adjustment* phase, and we celebrated events such as being given an office space or bathroom access as Melanie shared below.

> I've been at [the school] for a year and a half. So I got a key in the fall, but I left said key in the office in December and I went to school on Wednesday and I couldn't get in. One of my former students saw me trying to figure out what to do in the hall. I asked if she would let me into the work room, and she said "Yes. In fact, I'll give you the code." Which is how I now have access to the bathroom. She gave it to me and said this one is different, and I had to write it down. But most of them are this number, so now I can access all of them in the school. It's fantastic!"

In addition to physical spaces, having access to information required significant effort and ***adjustment***. Securing a spot on the email distribution list, being included in department and administrative meetings, and having dedicated time with building leaders for planning took time and persistence, and represent the struggles of *culture shock*. Melanie explains, "The reason I meet with the interns everywhere that I can is that as a [faculty-in-residence] it gives me a way to not just stand in the halls. It gives me a way to try to get in with somebody." These experiences speak to the *acceptance of reality* that occurs as faculty navigate their new role as members of a P-12 school. While some of the faculty were on school-wide email distribution lists, and therefore had more access to information, others relied solely on teachers and administrators to remember to send them school-related news and reminders. Jamie recalls walking into the school and noticing nearly all of the students and teachers dressed as snowmen. Feeling very much like an outsider in *culture shock*, Jamie remarked, "I would have dressed up too, had I known."

*Relationships.* The theme of *relationships* includes not only our varied relationships with teachers (including alumni and first year teachers), administrators, and staff, but also navigating our role between school faculty and school administrators, and being recognized as a constant, recurring presence in the school by teachers not directly participating in PDS initiatives. As much as we wanted to **jump in and use our expertise** during the *honeymoon* phase to begin projects we thought would help the school, it became clear that we would not get anywhere without first establishing relationships with various stakeholders—and we had to ***accept the reality*** that it would be a relatively slow process.

Generally, our first relationship within the school was with the principal. The principal introduced us to faculty and staff, provided us with a workspace, and set the tone for the relationship between the school and the university. In conversations with school leaders, we gained insight into the school priorities and could begin to see how we might ***adjust* to the established culture** based upon our own areas of expertise. For example, Sammy formed a connection with the school after discussing with the principal her focus on working with students living in poverty. "*Disrupting Poverty* has two authors and they are going to be at the conference in June. So the principal agreed to go with me. I was telling him about Eric Jensen, so he's taking a group of teachers out to Eric Jensen in Phoenix—so that's good."

In addition to using her own expertise to support the school, Sammy and others sought ways to search for other resources that could support the school and strengthen the mutually beneficial relationship. For example, the director of the university's technology center participated in efforts to increase classroom technology use at one school, while another FIR enlisted the help of co-teaching trainers to work with school staff. These more formal relationships were beneficial in helping us find our way in the school from the perspective of administration, a top-down approach. However, we also knew that forming relationships with individual teachers was important. We found that one of the most obvious groups of teachers to talk with were alumni associated with the university, some of whom we had actually taught, while others were graduates in other content areas outside our own. The more time we had spent with an alum as a pre-service teacher, the easier it was to form a relationship with them as an in-service teacher—the act of **searching for available connections** as part of the *experimentation/adjustment* stage of acculturation. While a seemingly easy approach, finding time to nourish these relationships was a challenge given the busy lives teachers lead. We found that simply standing with teachers in the hall during class changes, or visiting during planning, gave us some time to build relationships with teachers. These strategies had to be employed day after day, week after week, before they would eventually lead to a plan of action as shared by Melanie.

> Also when I go there, I walk all the halls, so I was standing out to talk to one of the interns. A former MAT student approached and asked for my opinion. I see her around, and she was one of the ones who said she might do action research. So we talked about that again and she said she would do it. She still has to figure out what and I'm going to talk to her again. If you walk the halls enough, something will happen.

We found that one of the best ways to build relationships with teachers was to ***accept the hectic reality*** of the school day schedule and ***experiment*** with ways to "fit in." Informally, we all shared examples of how we jumped in to help "on-the-fly" from escorting students to the bus, to watching a class while the teacher went to the restroom, to assisting with active shooter drills described earlier. "I did the Lunch with Leaders so I went and did a career strand for the career teacher so they could have time to eat. It helped me gain some credibility and helped all different people."

An important aspect that often goes missed when working with candidates as they learn about the acculturation process is the importance of maintaining, nurturing, and providing space for relationships with those in like circumstances. Having regularly scheduled time for the FIR to gather and "debrief" provided an opportunity to explore challenges and successes of being a new member of the school culture. As Jamie shared, "I have to say before we move on...I love this group. Everyone is so open and honest and there's like an air of collegiality and so I'm very happy to be here. It makes me feel like I'm not going through these things by myself."

*Perspective.* Perspective encompasses the existing structures present in the school and university that can help or hinder relationships, continuity of people in leadership roles (administrators, liaisons, mentor teachers), and the flexibility of the school, the FIR, and the university. The inter-relationality of school-university partnership goes without saying; however, it is often the ability to recognize and interpret the perspective of one's place that significantly impacts success. As higher education faculty participating in PK-12 work, we found the need to be both patient and flexible—to understand the context in which our new colleagues were existing and often gain new perspectives on time and productivity.

Being faculty who are well-educated with a certain amount of expertise in specific areas, our **perceived competence** (*honeymoon* stage) often drifted to feelings of **uselessness** (*culture shock*). We had to consistently rethink our perspectives of purpose and relationships. Melanie shared thoughts about a new project between Winthrop and the school that was unrelated to teacher education and hence, Melanie's own areas of expertise. "It used to really bother me that I was doing a thing that wasn't related to my skills and interests. It's not technology or assessment. It's not *my* thing, but it's a thing!" Melanie's perspective on her role as a FIR had to shift—and become more **integrated**—based upon the needs of the school. She further explains, "After working as a FIR for several years, I discovered my role was more about being at the school and serving where needed. I didn't need to necessarily conduct research in my area of expertise. My research became my work in the school." While having to be flexible with their role perspective, faculty also realized the patience needed in many situations to move projects forward. Considering the perspective of teachers and administrators who were busy (at best) is described in this attempt to engage a teacher in action research: "I had mentioned the action research to her earlier when we thought we would be able to do it last semester. She agreed and I sent her the information, but not right away so I wouldn't be pushy." Progress was often hindered by other projects as Morgan shared, "I wanted to hang on this year because I thought the PLC thing might come together for an English Learner focus, but they're progressing slower on that. There are little bits of progress."

The FIR also discovered the critical nature of understanding and searching for a balance of existing structures between PK-12 and the university (e.g., schedules, buildings, relationships, etc.). To understand and ***integrate*** these varying structures was a time-intensive undertaking, but became a necessary component of the process. The FIR had to examine their own schedules and, in collaboration with the professional development school liaison, plan a time during which they could be present at the P-12 school. There are scheduling factors to consider at both the P-12 and university levels. Many of the P-12 schools have existing structures such as collaboration days, common planning time, and MTSS or RtI working groups. Morgan found a good fit within one of the existing structures, noting "I work with various groups on what they call math collaboration days where faculty plan and talk about how to conceptually teach math." At the university level, there are class times, office hours, and meetings to navigate. In fact, Melanie shared her frustration at often having to rush back to the university campus for meetings, which cut her time at the high school short. "My main challenge is the university common meeting time. I go to the high school on Thursdays, and I have to leave early to be back on campus by 11:00."

Considering varying perspectives also meant ***adjustin****g* to the nature of climate and morale in the P-12 school setting—building an understanding of teacher and administrator perspective and, at times, navigating the disconnect between the two. Yolanda shares her initial interactions as a relatively new FIR.

> So, it's really nice to see them [teachers] and be able to interact with them in the hallway. A concern of mine is that I don't know how to act. They see me now and it's like "let me vent to you." There's something I'm doing that's making that happen. It's not that it's a bad thing, but I don't want them to just see me as that...I was afraid that the opposite would be true. That when I went into a classroom they would say, "oh there she is, don't say anything" because I worked closely with the principal.

Yolanda continued to share the challenge she experienced engaging teachers in action research when they seemed overwhelmed by their daily work as educators. ***Accepting the reality*** of teacher perspective on what they wanted to do versus their mental and emotional capacities became an important aspect of the FIR role. Sammy quickly re-envisioned the idea of service-learning through interactions with school administrators. "I'm doing a service-learning project...so the assistant principal was so thankful. She just came back from maternity leave, and she's going to be able to get some help. It is giving back."

## Conclusion

Table 2 summarizes the integration of the acculturation curve with the established themes. Similar to finding oneself as a member of a new cultural group, initiating and sustaining a Professional Development School is full of promise and possibilities, but also comes with a sense of disequilibrium as participants determine their place and purpose. The process encapsulates new environments and new relationships and requires that participants adapt as they move through the acculturation process.

In our study with the five university faculty participants and five Professional Development Schools, we found the emerging themes of purpose, access, relationships, and perspective helped illustrate the acculturation process faculty experienced. Faculty discovered their purpose, gained access to physical and digital spaces, developed relationships, and gained new perspectives as they became members of their P-12 school communities. Future research should explore advances in the acculturation field that recognize the need for greater specificity in considering the "contextual levels of influence"—person, microsystem, political-social context, and global forces (Juang & Syed, 2019, p. 243). In examining the evidence brought forth from this study, these levels seem of significant importance and may be pivotal in the planning, sustaining, and success of school-university partnerships. SUP

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