

Guest Editor's Introduction: Professionalism and Partnerships

By Johanna K. Lemlech

Since the late 1980s, professional partnerships between public schools and universities have been considered a panacea for many of the ills of public education. The professional partnership is touted to improve teaching and professional development, initiate systemic reform, restructure schools, break the egg-crate isolation of classroom teachers, engage professors of education in clinical settings, respond to community needs, and in general, reform teacher education.

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Whether a partnership is a partnership depends on the eyes of the beholder. Similar to the concept of collegial relationships, partnerships may be real or *pseudo*. The partnership represents an agreement to collaborate in certain ways; there are assets and debits, constraints and rewards. When a partnership ends, there are treasured memories and sometimes hard feelings.

Ideally the partnership creates a professional

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community for making informed judgments. The partnership should provide a means for participants to come together and use their expertise to improve practice for all involved. The collaborative relationship needs a process for dealing with ways to support each other, problem solve, and resolve disputes. University teachers and public school teachers must find a balance between meddling, suggesting, and supporting.

There is a fine-line difference between collegial relations and a collaborative partner relationship. Collegial relations require a period of time to develop mutual trust, joint reflection with opportunity to discuss and debate, commitment to consulting, and the sharing of expertise.

The collaborative partner relationship is a working relationship that is frequently inspired and maintained by a financial award. The partnership is **negotiated** and situation specific. Partnerships that persist over time despite the cessation of funding do so as a result of good communication, the sharing of mutual goals, and significant time for reflection. Successful partnerships have the potential to develop authentic collegial relationships.

The eight articles in this thematic issue of *Teacher Education Quarterly* were openly solicited and peer reviewed for appropriateness to the theme and the journal's readers. They all describe collaborative work, but they differ in the environmental settings and the foci of their efforts.

The lead article by Lee Teitel of the University of Massachusetts, Boston, provides a global and positive discussion of the role of professional development schools in transforming the roles and responsibilities of teachers, the support needed by teachers, and how professional development schools can assist in the preparation of teachers.

Allan Yarrow and Jan Millwater of the Queensland University of Technology take us to Australia to introduce the concept of a *practernship* collaboration between school and university that is a variation of typical internship/apprenticeship programs.

Linda Kroll and Jane Bowyer of Mills College and Marty Rutherford and Margaret Hauben of the Oakland Unified School District remind us that collaborations between school and university have been around since the times of Dewey. They describe a partnership effort focused on the student teaching experience.

From the University of Georgia, C. Stephen White, James G. Deegan, and Martha Alexsaht-Snider examine public school teachers', university students', and university faculties' perspectives on their changing roles and relationships in a partnership that included an alternative teacher education program linked to professional development and a curriculum reform component.

Anamarie Garcia and George Barker of California State University, Northridge, chronicle the steps involved in pursuing a collaboration among community members, the university, and a school district cluster of elementary and secondary schools. They give us insight into the incentives, funding, challenges, and difficulties they encountered.

Karen Hamlin of Willamette University investigated how partnership efforts between school and university affect the professional development of supervising teachers. She concluded that there are reciprocal benefits for student teachers and their supervisors.

Anne DiPardo of the University of Iowa satirically describes three case study environments and the effect of collaboration in the workplace. She asked the teachers, “Why they were collaborating, and what about their school contexts served to promote or impede what they were together trying to accomplish?”

Mitzi Lewison, a university researcher, and Sue Holliday, a Southern California principal, collaborated with a group of elementary teachers to engage in study group sessions, keep professional journals, and read and discuss research articles focused on the teaching of language arts. Using a critical narrative research model, the narratives of teachers and researchers are used to describe their efforts.

As a discerning reader, I challenge you—as these authors challenged themselves—to keep in mind these questions:

1. Are these professional partnerships real or *pseudo*?
2. What is the role of university professors and public school teachers in the preparation of new teachers?
3. Have changes in the roles and relationships of public school teachers and university professors improved the educational enterprise?
4. In collaborative efforts, what does each group benefit? Lose? Can each do their professional job/tasks better than before?

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