Contents

1. Introduction 1
Principles for a Partnership 2
Existing University-District Partnerships for Induction: What We Know, What We Need to Learn 4

2. Who Should Form a Partnership? 6
The Fundamental Principle of a Partnership 6
Different Types of Partnerships 8
Context and the Nature of the Partnership 10
Guidelines for Dealing with the Minefield of Partnership Creation 13

3. How Do We Create a Common Purpose Across Institutions? 16
What Other Research Educators Say About Vision on Teacher Learning 16
Definitions on Vision, Mission, and Values 17
A Professor of Educational Leadership Speaks on Vision 18
New Teacher Center's Alignment with Rozycki's Thinking About Vision 20
An Elementary Principal's Perspective on Vision 20
A County Office of Education Superintendent's Perspective on Vision and Partnerships 21
Our Reflections on Ulli's and Michael's Voices 23
Using the New Teacher Center Continuum of Teacher Development to Create a Common Purpose or Vision When Working with K–17 Partnerships 24
A Starting Point for Creating, Developing, and Implementing a Vision and Purpose for K–17 Partnerships 25

4. Who Are the Leaders? 27
Leadership Models 27
Evaluating the Leadership of Your Partnership 35

5. Is the Partnership Working? 37
What Do We Mean by a "Working K–17 Partnership" 37
What Does a Working Partnership Require? 37
What Does a Working Partnership Look Like? 41
How Well Is the Partnership Working? How Do We Know? So What? 42

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6. How to Sustain the Partnership 47
Reaffirming the Mission, Goals, Philosophy, and Outcomes 48
Assessing Partnership Appropriateness, Need, and Value 48
Common Language, Tools, Protocols, and Professional Development 49
Mutual, Clear, and Ongoing Communication Processes and Protocols 50
Ongoing Fine-Tuning for Continual Improvement, Renewal, and Revitalization 51
Systemizing the Partnership 52
A Case for Multiple Partners 53

7. Community as Partner 56
Why Must the Community Be a Part of an Effective Partnership with Universities and Schools? 56
How Can Schools and Universities Support Novice Teachers' Understanding and Advocacy for the Community in Which They Teach? 57
How Can Universities and Schools Become More Responsive to the Needs and Values of the Communities They Serve? 59
How Can Schools and Universities Tap Community Resources to Increase Student Success? 60
How Can Schools and Universities Communicate to the Community the Resources They Offer? 60
How Can Universities and Schools Support Communities in Developing Their Own Teachers? 61
How Do You Build and Sustain a Partnership with a Community? 61

8. Final Thoughts 64
Part 1—Questions 66
Part 2—Lessons Learned 67
Part 3—Recommendations 68

Appendix A: Collaborative Assessment Log 73

Appendix B: Continuum of Teacher Development 74

Appendix C: Mid-Year Review 88

Appendix D: Professional Growth Reflections 89

Appendix E: Self-Assessment Summary 90

References 91

Index 93

About the Authors 105

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Current conceptions of teacher training show a distinct division of labor. Colleges and universities have the responsibility of providing pre-service candidates with theoretical knowledge of pedagogy and practical experience through student teaching. School districts, however, provide in-service training on the practical aspects of teaching a specific curriculum to a unique student population. Districts also have the responsibility of training teachers how to implement programs associated with policy mandates. Such division of labor for pre-service and in-service training is now being questioned. In a report on urban teacher induction programs, Fideler and Haslekorn (1999) indicated:

> Most school districts coordinate their own induction programs—nearly half do so without any partners whatsoever. With the spotlight on raising professional standards across states and districts, this rather sparse evidence of partnerships is disappointing. At the very least, it represents a missed opportunity for IHEs [Institutes of Higher Education] and LEAs [Local Education Agencies] to communicate and collaborate about what novice teachers should be expected to know and be able to do at the start of their careers, as well as IHEs and LEAs to do something constructive about this make-or-break career phase. (p. 113)

The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (1996) argued:

> A coherent program of mentoring and instruction by school and university faculty is essential if teacher education is to be a powerful intervention in the experience of prospective teachers. In the long run, universities should focus as much on building strong clinical training and induction programs—including preparing and supporting cooperating teachers and mentors so that they become excellent teachers of teachers and partners in the teacher education process—as they do on the direct instruction of new teachers in courses. (p. 77)

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These arguments suggest that supporting teachers to become highly qualified may necessitate some type of partnership between universities and districts. The question then becomes what principles should guide the development of a partnership between a university and a district, and what are some of the challenges that they will face during start-up and institutionalization.

PRINCIPLES FOR A PARTNERSHIP

In an article about the development of teachers, Feiman-Nemser (2001) indicated that one problem with current programs supporting new teachers is that induction is viewed as separate from pre-service training. Feiman-Nemser said:

> Instead of viewing induction as part of a broad continuum of professional learning opportunities for teachers, induction is regarded as short-term support designed to ease new teachers' entry into teaching and help them cope with their 1st year on the job. The narrow vision goes hand in hand with the lack of coordination between pre-service providers and those responsible for induction programs. (p. 1031)

Feiman-Nemser also argued that the same problem occurs in pre-service training between academic and clinical training. She stated:

> When the people responsible for field experiences do not work closely with the people who teach academic and professional courses, there is no productive joining of forces around a common agenda and no sharing of expertise. (p. 1020)

If we accept these arguments, then one of the challenges facing the development of a university-district partnership for new teacher support is the lack of communication within and across organizations, specifically teacher-education programs and school districts.

One way to view the separation of universities and districts as well as clinical and academic staff is through Scott's work on organizations. Scott (2001) argued that a way that institutional change occurs is through the process of diffusion. In order for diffusion to occur, though, organizations need to believe they "occupy the same position in the social structure" (p. 167). For universities and school districts, Scott's argument suggests that communication may be limited because the two organizations do not perceive themselves as structurally equivalent. Universities see their responsibility for teacher training as what happens before a person enters the profession (pre-

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service), and districts see their responsibility as starting when someone enters the profession (in-service). Within a university teacher education program, structural inequality may occur because people teaching academic courses are eligible for tenure and pre-service supervisors are not. Consequently, the lack of perceived structural equivalence within a university, as well as between universities and school districts limit the perception that teacher development is a continuum of development.

Cobb, McClain, Lamberg, and Dean (2003) studied diffusion across schools by looking at the interactions of six mathematics teachers in four middle schools. Although the teachers work at similar grade levels, they saw their schools as different in terms of administrative policies, students, and resources. According to Wenger (1998, cited in Cobb et al., 2003), a community of practice is characterized by:

1. A joint enterprise: Common goals.
2. Mutual relationships: Common standards for accountability.
3. A well-honed repertoire of ways of reasoning with tools and artifacts: Common tools and agreement on how they are used.

Based on these characteristics, each middle school could be viewed as a community of practice, and Cobb and colleagues' objective was to create a new community of practice by having teachers cross existing boundaries. Brown and Duguid (2001) noted that people crossing over communities of practice "gives access to that community's identity and through that its collective knowledge" (p. 203). As a result of meetings facilitated by Cobb and colleagues, the participants in the study came to view themselves as mathematics teachers who happened to work at a particular school rather than someone working at a particular school who happened to teach mathematics.

Though the theory behind community of practice is generally applied to interactions between teachers, the Cobb et al. study illustrates how the theory can be applied to cross-organizational interaction. According to Wenger and Snyder (2000), a key to this cross-organizational interaction is "groups of people informally bound together by shared expertise and passion for a joint enterprise" (p. 139) who learn together "by focusing on problems directly related to their work" (p. 143).

Based on the community of practice research, a K–17 partnership for new teacher support could be established if the following conditions were met:

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1. A joint enterprise: Teacher training is understood to be a continuum from pre-service through induction and into in-service.
2. Mutual relationships: Cross-organizational accountability can be facilitated using state teaching standards, if established, or national subject area standards, if both organizations agree.
3. A well-honed repertoire of ways of reasoning with tools and artifacts: Creation of tools that allow universities and districts to have a common vocabulary for what teachers have learned, what they need to learn, and when they should learn it.

EXISTING UNIVERSITY-DISTRICT PARTNERSHIPS FOR INDUCTION: WHAT WE KNOW, WHAT WE NEED TO LEARN

University-district partnerships focusing on new teacher induction have been in existence since the late 1980s. Three examples of such programs are:

The University of Cincinnati: Since 1990, the university has required teacher-education students to spend their 5th year as interns who are mentored by veteran teachers.

University of Illinois at Chicago: In 1997, the university formed the Mentoring and Induction of New Teachers program along with Chicago Public Schools and local teacher unions.

The New Teacher Project: In 1988, the New Teacher Project was started by the University of California at Santa Cruz, the Santa Cruz County Office of Education, and several local districts. Since its inception, the project has trained more than 7,000 new teachers.

By looking at one of these projects in greater detail, we can see how the partnership is related to the three principles from the community of practice literature. The New Teacher Project is a collaboration for teacher preparation and induction based on the California Standards for the Teaching Profession. Courses in the 5th-year teacher preparation program at the university are designed to help teacher candidates understand the standards and how to put them into practice. For new teachers hired in one of the 27 districts that are part of the New Teacher Project, induction is a continuation of the pre-service training. Mentors work with new teachers using tools like the Individual Learning Plan to set professional goals and to monitor progress. Mentors also help new teachers analyze student work to determine how curriculum and

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instruction should be modified to improve learning. Mentors observe classes taught by new teachers, as well as model instructional strategies. It is important to note that the Individual Learning Plan and observation protocols used during induction are also used by university supervisors during candidates' student teaching activities.

This brief summary of the work of the New Teacher Project illustrates that the university and school districts have created a community of practice. The work of each institution is determined by a common set of standards. The standards provide a means for the institutions to discuss teacher development and a way to have institutional accountability. Each institution uses a common set of tools to monitor new teacher development. The value of the partnership is that new teacher retention after 6 years exceeds 90% (Strong & St. John 2001).

The existence of these partnerships indicates that universities and districts can work together on the goal of improved new teacher support. However, these and other partnerships were not studied at the inception so little is known about how partnerships are formed (Wood, 2001). For example, if a state does not have teaching standards, universities and districts will need to create a continuum of teacher development that will be useful to both institutions. We also do not know what motivated each institution to start the discussions that led to the eventual partnership. There is also uncertainty about what processes were incorporated so the partnership could evolve based on changing state requirements and funding shortfalls.

We have written this book to help answer some of the questions about the inception of university–district partnerships. The following chapters will focus on who should form a partnership, how you create a common purpose across institutions, who should be the leader, how you evaluate the progress of a partnership, how you sustain it as personnel and resources change, and what the role of the community is in a partnership. Although we do not have all the answers to some of these issues, it is our hope that what we have learned can be of help to those choosing to face the challenges of education in a different way.

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CHAPTER 2

Who Should Form a Partnership?

To understand who should be in a partnership, we must first agree on what a partnership is. The Random House Webster's Dictionary defines a partnership as "the state or condition of being a partner," and a partner is

1. A person who shares or is associated with another in some action or endeavor, or
2. One or two or more persons who contribute capital to establish a commercial venture and who usually share in the risks and the profits.

While the notion of a shared action, resources, risks, and benefits is consistent with the discussion in the previous chapter about communities of practice, these concepts miss a fundamental principle of a partnership. The purpose of this chapter is to discuss what this fundamental principle is, the different types of partnerships, how the creation of partnerships is influenced by context, and some guidelines and pitfalls in defining who should be in a partnership.

THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLE OF A PARTNERSHIP

The fundamental principle for forming a partnership is that at least two institutions have a common desire or goal. Although it seems obvious, our experience is that this principle can be overlooked. Our experience also indicates that if this principle is not in place, the partnership should not be formed. If a partnership is formed that ignores this principle, it is likely the partnership will fail within several years, regardless of funding. Conversely, if the principle is followed, the partnership will probably continue through changes in funding, leadership, or institutional policy.

To illustrate the principle, we can look at two partnerships the New Teacher Center (NTC) worked with for several years. The Everest partner-

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ship, which followed the principle, consisted of a school district that worked with the local state university. Both institutions had limited resources but had common interests because the university pre-service program placed students in the districts for student teaching, and the district hired many of the graduates of the pre-service program. Both institutions saw the potential of a partnership as a way to link pre-service education and in-service training to improve the quality of teaching and student learning. In contrast, the Alpaca partnership, which did not follow the principle, was formed by a small university that placed its pre-service students in the local school district for student teaching. The university saw this partnership as a way to work more with the district and bring in external funding from organizations interested in university-district partnerships. The district saw the partnership as a means to maintain current relationships with a small local university even though most of the university pre-service graduates went elsewhere for employment. During the time we worked with the two groups, we saw the Everest partnership flourish, despite changes in leadership and funding, and the Alpaca partnership make very little progress.

A condition on the fundamental principle is that the people in the partnership are able to articulate the goal or desire clearly and succinctly. If the Everest partnership was asked to state why they worked together, both partners would talk about improving teacher development. If the Alpaca partnership was asked why they worked together, the district would talk about improving relationships with institutions in the community and the university would talk about external funding. Thus, Everest had a common desire and Alpaca did not. More importantly, Everest could state its desire briefly and Alpaca could not. This difference in the brevity of their statements of purpose does not mean that Everest did not understand the complexities of their desire or that Alpaca was fuzzy in its thinking. On the contrary, our interactions with the leadership in the partnerships indicated that they were competent people and understood the magnitude and complexity of what they were trying to accomplish. Everest had an advantage, though, because the limited focus of their goal, to improve teacher quality by linking pre- and in-service training, allowed them to limit the scope of their partnership. The Alpaca partnership was not limited because the district continued to work on improving community relationships with institutions other than their university partner, and the university kept seeking external funding, which moved them in different directions. Thus, brevity in the articulation of a partnership desire allows institutions to better maintain coherence of action.

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You might now be wondering, why is a chapter on who should be in a partnership focusing on articulating a desire or goal? Some would argue that the first step in creating a partnership is finding two institutions willing to work together and then have them decide on a goal. We would argue that the first step is having one institution define its desire and then look for an institution that shares the desire. Part of the reason for this approach is institutional history. The New Teacher Center is an outgrowth of the New Teacher Project, which was formed by Ellen Moir, then the director of the teacher-education program at the University of California at Santa Cruz. Ms. Moir wanted to improve the quality of teachers by improving the link with local school districts. The New Teacher Project was formed by local districts that shared Ms. Moir's desire. Thus, the desire of one institution led to a partnership between the university and local districts, not the other way around.

Another reason for focusing on defining a desire first is based on our experience working with new partnerships. In 2003, the Carnegie Corporation asked the New Teacher Center to work with a small number of university-district partnerships, regardless of how long their partnership had been in place, on new teacher induction. This project gave us the opportunity to work with the Everest and Alpaca partnerships. The Everest partnership was in the early stages of its development, having started cross-institutional discussions about teacher development several years previously. The Alpaca partnership formed because both institutions saw the opportunity for free professional development and the potential of external funding. As we worked with these partnerships, we saw the progress of the Everest partnership as the partners learned how to operationalize their desire. We also saw the struggles of the Alpaca partnership because they could never come up with a common desire or goal. Thus, our bias is to define the desire first and then look for someone who shares it, rather than finding an institution and then trying to find a common desire.

DIFFERENT TYPES OF PARTNERSHIPS

Once an institution has defined its desire and believes the desire will be met by working with another institution, the next step is looking at the kind of partnership that would move the work forward. Preceding discussions about partnerships have focused on the two-institution model, with one institution

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